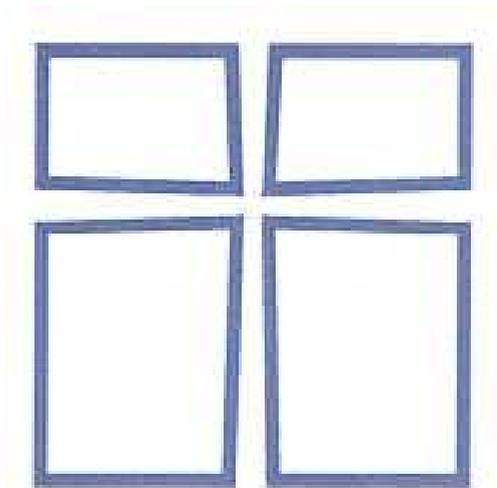


---

# *Theodosia*

---



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

Editorial Team:

Sister Christiane Jungo  
Sister Edelgund Kuhn  
Sister Anna Affolter  
Sister Elsit J. Ampattu  
Sister Dorothee Halbach

English version:

Sr. Roseline Kujur, India

## Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Picture</b>  | 4  |
| <b>Editorial</b>  | 5  |
| Sr. Christiane Jungo  |    |
| <b>Sr. M.Sigrig Voggel</b>  | 7  |
| <b>1919-2001</b>  |    |
| <b>Facilitator of the Process of Transition in the Indian Mission</b>                                     |    |
| Sr. Shashi Pakki, Hazaribag, Central Province, India and Sr. Elsit Ampattu, General Leadership, Ingenbohl |    |
| <b>Education of Women and its Impact on Indian Society</b>  | 12 |
| Sr. Tessa Churanadu, Hazaribag, Central Province India  |    |
| <b>10 Years of Province Europa Mitte</b>  | 31 |
| Sr. Magdalena Walcher, Wels, Province Europa Mitte  |    |
| <b>Art as a Spiritual Place</b>   | 35 |
| Sr. Regina Lehmann, Hegne, Province Baden-Württemberg   |    |
| <b>My Image “Free Flight to God”</b>  | 39 |
| Sr. Regina Lehmann, convent Hegne, Province Baden Württemberg   |    |

## Theodosia 2018, 1

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>My Stone as Spiritual Thought-Provoking Impulse</b>                 | 42 |
| Sr. Wiltrud List, Convent Graz, Province Europa Mitte                  |    |
| <b>Art as Proclamation "Ordeifer" - Outside Space and Time</b>         | 43 |
| Sr. Gielia Degonda, Theresianum, Ingenbohl, Motherprovince Switzerland |    |
| <b>Meeting of the General Leaderships of Ingenbohl and Menzingen</b>   | 44 |
| Sr. Dorothee Halbach, General Leadership, Ingenbohl                    |    |
| <b>Among Refugees in Sicily</b>  | 47 |
| Sr. Veera Bara from Vicariate Uganda, in Caltanissetta, Sicily         |    |
| <b>Information from the General Leadership</b>                         | 51 |
| <b>Entered into Eternal Life in 2017</b>                               | 52 |



Verena de Nève, passion and resurrection

## Editorial

The past few years have been marked by profound changes at all levels. Whether in ecclesiastical or secular circles, the theme has been that, "Nothing is as constant as transition", as the philosopher Heraclitus had intuited in 500 BC. Today we are gradually learning to accept change as constant. We also learn to see an opportunity in every change. Every change makes us learn something new. In each province, in each vicariate, therefore, "Vision" and action plans are formulated and initiated. We will hear about the changes again and again.

The "Theodosia" commemorates Sr. M. Sigrid Voggel, who for more than 50 years initiated and accompanied changes in various fields in India. She was a true "Facilitator of the Process of Transition in the Indian Mission." Sr. Shashi Pakki and Sr. Elsit have written on her visionary work.

Basic thoughts on "Education of Women and its Impact on Indian Society", was presented by Sr. Tessy Churanadu at the L.U.C.Y. - Foundation.

When Sr. Magdalena Walcher looks back on "10 Years of Province Europa Mitte", then, inevitably, there is talk of experiences with changes.

Our Vision 2020 is not just about changes, but also about "Spiritual Places". Three sisters, who are artists approach this topic in rather unexpected ways: first with personal reflections on "Art as Spiritual Place", then with a favorite image "Free Flight to God" by Sr. Regina Lehmann, "My Stone as Thought Provoking Impulse" by Sr. Wiltrud List and "Art as Proclamation" with the image "Ordeifer" (translated from Romansh into German: "Outside Space and Time ") by Sr. Gielia Degonda.

At regular intervals there occurs "Meetings of the General Leaderships of Ingenbohl and Menzingen" as a forum for the exchange of ideas. Sr. Dorothee Halbach felt that being together was a special spiritual place.

For the third time Sr. Veera Bara gives us an insight into her unusual task, "Among Refugees in Sicily", and she expresses her gratitude for support from our community.

Through the "Information from the General Leadership", we learn of appointments and of a forthcoming General Visitation. Attached are small statistics of the year 2017 and a suggestion from Theodosia editors.

Last year 102 sisters, "Entered into Eternal Life". May they be accompanied by our gratitude and be blessed by our God!

Outlook: The next "Theodosia" will publish the multi-faceted contributions on "Stand for Human Dignity" presented at the Conference of the representatives against Human Trafficking in September 2017 in Ingenbohl.

Sr. Christiane Jungo

## **Sr. M. Sigrid Voggel 1919-2001**

### **Facilitator of the Process of Transition in Indian Mission**

Sr. Shashi Pakki, Hazaribag, Central Province, India and Sr. Elsit Ampattu, General Leadership, Ingenbohl

In the light of the Vision 2020 and the theme of the Congress 2016, Theodosia's Editorial Team discussed various personalities who made a difference in their time. Hence here is a brief tribute to late Sr. M. Sigrid Voggel, who is an unforgettable agent of change in our Indian mission.

#### **Perceiving changes as challenges**

Transition is an essential part of life. We see its traces everywhere, in the world, in societies in communities. It is a call to a larger life. As a congregation, we too are

confronted with many processes of change. Our provinces and vicariates are experiencing transition in diverse ways - change in structure and number, style of leadership and functioning, growth and expansion.

This situation urged the General Leadership to work out a common vision for the whole congregation. Under the able guidance of experts, they formulated Vision 2020 which was finalized during the congress 2016 with the theme "Facilitating the Process of Transition".



Sr. M. Sigrid, a woman with a large heart



Sr. M. Angelica Wildhaber, Sr. M. Sigrid Voggel, Sr. Britto Madassery, Sr. Joseline E. Pauvath

This vision like a compass directs us to sense the pulse of the present time and to seek innovative ways to live our committed life and to face the process of transition.

### **Her life and work**

Indeed Fr. Theodosius Florentini our Founder can be proud of his valiant daughter Sr. Sigrid, who imbibed his revolutionary and indomitable spirit and dynamism. What Fr. Theodosius was to the people of his time during the industrial revolution, Sr. Sigrid was to the poor, the marginalized, especially women and children in Indian mission. Undeniably, she had a broad vision and a magnanimous heart open for everyone. She was a pioneer in

empowerment of women as she was convinced that women must take their rightful place in church and society.

Her opening address to the sisters in the Provincial Chapter 1973 expresses clearly her prophetic vision for a dynamic change in our mind set and a clarion call to move out courageously and to journey with people:

*“The adaptation and changes are so much faster in the present world. Every new year, even months bring challenges not foreseen. Religious life will never be what it was. Let us not get tired of changes and renewal ... We need to move constantly in the right direction. A deep commitment to Christ, an unwavering trust in the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the willingness to service and sacrifice will keep us afloat on the sea of this changing world”.*

If we reflect on these profound words she wrote at that time we realize how deeply she was aware of the change that was happening in and around. She was not just a woman of words but of action. Her profound and unwavering trust in God’s guidance, her commitment to Christ, her readiness for service and sacrifice and her wide thinking led her to take the right action at the right time. Her inner

disposition is well expressed in the words of Isaiah:

“Enlarge the space of your tent, do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left” – Is 54:2f.

And that is what happened. When she took up the responsibility as the first Provincial Superior of the newly erected Indian Province in 1970, there were only 219 sisters and 23 communities and when she handed over the responsibility to Sr. Julia Erni in 1979, the number had nearly doubled: 416 sisters from different ethnic groups and cultures, 46 communities spreading from east and west and north and south of India. Clearly, during her leadership the Province flourished and spread out to different directions.

Born in Germany immediately after the First World War she grew up experiencing the aftermath of war – drastic political, cultural, economic and social change. At the age of 8 she lost her father and later two of her brothers in war. The big loss she suffered, could gradually turn into great strength in her life. The upheaval and turmoil experienced as a girl prepared her to become an agent of change. She joined the congregation of Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross at Ingenbohl in



Sr. M. Sigrid, jubilee felicitations

Switzerland at the age of 16 and joined the Indian mission in 1950 and made India her home.

As a human being her greatness was that she had tremendous faith in humanity, in her sisters and she loved them. She encouraged the initiatives of others and overlooked their shortcomings. She stood by the strong and supported the weak. Her wide vision she translated into reality. She perceived the unemployment problem of youth in India and established a Vocational Training Institute at Hazaribag in 1980. It was a novel mission at that time as many religious congregations stuck to normal educational



Sr. M. Sigrid with students

system. She dared where others hesitated. This innovative mission of her time expanded into various job oriented courses like Fashion Designing, Secretarial Practice, Commerce, Hotel Management, Sculpture, Carving, Painting, Drawing, Photography etc. So many people have already benefited from this programme.

She loved flora and fauna and contributed her mite in the “Green Revolution”. In order to resolve the problem of the farmers she introduced subjects like agriculture, horticulture and so on. Gradually this project could be collaborated with the Government and now it has become an Institution known as Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK – Centre for Agricultural Studies). It has a wider scope for farming, animal husbandry, mushroom production,

fishery, goat rearing etc. Other trend setting activities were food for work, mother and child, housing projects etc. Women, children, orphans and the poor in general always found a home in her heart. She was risk taking and ventured into to remote villages, to new ethnic groups and cultures according to the need of the hour. The development in Santal Pargana is an outstanding example for this.

In all aspects of life, she was a generous dispenser of love and compassion making herself available to everyone. It is then no wonder that people fondly called her as “A person with a large heart”. Sr. Sigrid respected the Indian tradition and culture and inherited the values of the country during her fifty long years of life she spent there. This aspect of all

embracing love was visible at her burial on 23rd January 2001 when people flocked from all walks of life to pay their last homage to her.

There is nothing like dream to create the future. She not only dreamt big but passed on her dream to us her daughter as a legacy to follow.

### **Her Legacy**

Hold the dream, my daughters  
Let the rivers of mercy,  
Never, never run dry  
As long as there's a child in tears  
And a youngster in rags  
Denied a home and education,  
wrap him in the mantle of your care,  
Lift him up in your arms  
And give him the kiss of your love.  
Hold the dream, my daughters,

Bring solace to the sick,  
And justice to the crushed,  
Bring companionship to the lonely  
And faith in God's mercy  
To those in despair.

Hold the dream, my daughters  
Kindle the flame of compassion  
At the heart of the Lord.

Be a channel of grace  
In the desert of this world.  
Be loyal, courageous and strong  
He is with you.

Hold the dream my daughters,  
When you travel in darkness  
See the ray of eternal life  
Golden the seam of the cloud  
Heaven is yours, but don't come  
alone

Hold the hands of all  
Who lost the way and bring them  
home!

Hold the dream, my daughters  
hold on!

# Education of Women and its Impact on Indian Society

Sr. Tessa Churanadu, Hazaribag Central Province India

L.U.C.Y. Foundation – A foundation for education of girls and the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross, Ingenbohl in India have for many years maintained an intensive partnership. This foundation invited Sr. Tessa to present a talk in Germany on the topic “Importance of education of women and girls in India and its impact on the society”. Here is the presentation:

## **The importance of education of women and girls in India and its impact on the socio-political, economic and moral development of India**

### **1. Introduction**

India is the 7th largest country of the world with a population of above 121 Core (1210 million/1.21 billions) according to the census of 2011. It is the second most populous country on earth. In 1947, on August 15, India became independent of British colonial rule. Since 1950 India has been a democracy. It is the largest democracy on earth. A total of 415 languages are spoken in India. 21 languages are recognized as national languages. Hindi is the first national language and English, the second.

In India four of the great religions emerged: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. Christianity and Islam came later. According to Population census 2011,

80% of the population is committed to Hinduism  
14% are Muslims  
2% are Christians  
4% belongs to other beliefs

Indian culture is one of the oldest, richest and most diverse cultures on earth.

The motto of the country is: “Truth alone prevails.”

### **2. Status of women in India**

#### **2.1 Status of Indian women in the family**

Woman is the backbone of the family. As a daughter, she is faithful to her parents and tries to put her parent’s faith on the top of her priorities. Marriages are often arranged by the parents and daughters have no say in it. Often the daughters’ in-laws are under strict control of the in-laws. She adjusts and adapts to the customs of the new family and integrates into the joint family. As a sister, she feels obliged to take care of her brothers and sisters. Often she has even to sacrifice

schooling and other opportunities in order help out in the family in looking after the siblings and earning some money. An Indian woman is a true devotee of her husband, loving and caring. The husband takes all the important decision in the family and they do not even ask for their wife's opinion. As a mother, she loves, cares, corrects, motivates, teaches and is ready to give up even her life for the family. Most women in India enjoy little freedom to socialize. They are often considered as workforce at home and are still deprived of their worth and recognition.

India is a multifaceted society where women's status is heavily dependent on different variables like geographical location (urban/rural), educational status, social status (caste and class), and age. India is a patriarchal society, with strong preference for male children. Women at large are considered as second class citizens, although in the Hindu Scriptures woman's name is placed before the man's name. Indian society gives its women the image of "Mother" or "Devi" liable to great reverence and worship. Women Goddesses are part of the Indian tradition. "Durga" one of the powerful deities in India, is a woman. But the irony is that

## **2.2 Status of women in the society**





in India innumerable number of women is illiterate, abused through Child-marriage, Female infanticide, Sexual harassment, Dowry and so on. The status of women in India is paradoxical in nature.

Women form about half of the population of the country, but their situation has been grim. For centuries they have been denied opportunities for growth in the name of religion and socio-cultural practices. Before independence, women were prey to many customs and traditional rigidities due to which their status in the society came to its lowest point. In Hinduism, she was prevented from studying the Vedas or

performing any sacrifices. A widow is regarded as inauspicious. She cannot participate in social-religious ceremonies. Re-marriage was not permitted for high caste widows. But the Hindu male is not subject to such restrictions. In Islam a woman cannot become a priest and lead prayers. She is expected to practice seclusion and wear a veil, depriving her of right to participate freely in community functions. In India, Christian women are treated on par with men in their community.

However, with the passage of time, the status of women improved. Various movements

and protests contributed to some improvement in the status of women. Mahatma Gandhi who spurred the movement for women's emancipation called on women to shed their stereotyped roles. During the freedom struggle, women made their presence felt in the freedom struggle. The Constitution of India has made several provisions for the protection and promotion of the human rights of women, gender equality, affirmative action, freedom and security. The Preamble to the Constitution solemnly resolves to secure to all its citizens justice - social, economic and political and equality of status and of opportunity.

Despite the various efforts to improve the status of women through means of their own education, overt and covert manifestations of gender inequality and discrimination still persist in India.

#### Some facts and figures

- Sex Ratio: As per Census of 2011, there were 949 females to 1000 males in rural India against 929 females in urban India.
- According to the latest WHO data published in 2015 life

expectancy in India for Male is 67 and for female 70 years.

- Mortality rate for girls below five years old is 75% higher than for boys.
- Women are paid only 75% of the wages paid to men.
- 70 to 75 % of all agricultural activities are carried out by women in the rural India.
- A woman works 15 to 16 hours a day unpaid at home and underpaid outside.
- As per record of the election commission of India in 2014 out of the total 543 seats in the Lok Sabha (legislative assembly) only 61 seats, which is 11% were won by women.
- Female participation in elections has been 66% in the general elections in 2014 which is more or less equal to male participation of 67%.
- Out of 45 Ministerial positions in the central council of ministers, only 7 are women.
- There was only one woman judge out of 28 judges in the Supreme Court judges and there were only 65 judges out of 546 judges in different high courts.
- 30% females are in Indian Economic services and only 12% in Indian Trade services.

### 3. Women's education in India - an overview

Right from the early Vedic period (1500 BC to 500 BC) people have been celebrating the birth of a son, but in those days daughters born into a family were not neglected, although not educated properly. However, the scene was changed during the later Vedic Age where the daughters were considered as a social burden. Only the girls from the upper class families enjoyed the right of education and got proper nourishment. In Medieval period (8th to 18th Century) the conditions deteriorated for the females. In Muslim household they were taught at home while Hindu girls enjoyed the privilege of getting primary education with boys in schools. Child marriage was excessively prevalent. However, in the nineteenth century many social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Annie Besant came forward for the emancipation of women in India. Women's education got a boost after the country got independence in 1947 and the government has been taking various measures to provide education to all Indian women.

A National Commission of Women was set up to act as a watchdog on the matters concerning women



in 1992. Many programmes in the areas of education, health and employment have been initiated for development of women, rural as well as urban. As a result, literacy rate is going up and fertility rate is coming down. Making primary education free and compulsory, elimination of drop-out from schools, promotion of kindergarten and Crèches, Girls Hostels, Technical Institutions for women etc. are a few of such initiatives.

The women of the present generation are receiving higher education than the women of their preceding generation. A number of them are entering into certain new fields that were unknown to the woman's sphere of role-sets. Some are actively participating in social, economic, and political activities, enrolling themselves as members of political parties.

Few of the modern women are inclined towards the social issues

and are trying hard to improve the social status of women at large. Few women today occupy high ranking posts in administration and defence. Some women serve as governors and ministers. Few such eminent women are: Late Mrs. Indira Gandhi, (First woman prime minister) Mrs. Pratibha Patil, (First woman President) Medha Patkar, (Social activist) Kiran Bedi, (Inspector General of Police), Late Kalpana Chawla (Astronaut).

The modern woman keenly desires to enter into a work career because of the pressing economic

needs of the family. To fulfil the economic needs of the family and to achieve higher standard of living, the woman participates in economic activities. Some women have also achieved high fame in the areas of literature, music and acting. More and more women are joining the field of science, communication and information technology. Some of the women have started caring for their health, figure, cultural interests, academic pursuits, sports and games, religious activities, recreational needs, etc. just like their men counterpart.



The above reality is true only of a handful of women of the upper and middle class and with higher education. As per 2011 census the literacy rate of India is 74%. Female literacy rate is 65% while male literacy rate is 82%. 35% of males and 32% of females have completed primary level of education while 13% of males and 10% of females have completed secondary level of education. The adult literacy rate for female is 59% and for male is 79%. Just half of the rural adult females are literate against 77% urban females. The rate of female drop out from classes 1- 8 is 39%. This statistics raises the question: What are the barriers to women's education in India?

#### **4. Barriers to girls' education**

Indian women still constitute a large body of under - privileged citizens. The Backward Classes Commission set up by the Government of India in 1953 classified women of India as a backward group requiring special attention. The educational, economic, political and social backwardness of women makes them the largest group hindering the process of social change. The first barrier is:

##### **4.1 Gender stereotyping**

Through dominating social structures, a patriarchal country like India, men own, control and manage financial, intellectual and ideological resources as well as the labour, fertility, sexuality of women, and thus perpetuate gender discrimination. Consequently, women become victims and victimizers. As soon as a child is born, families and society begin the process of gendering. The birth of a son is celebrated, the birth of a daughter is filled with pain; sons are showered with love, respect, better food and proper health care. Boys are encouraged to be tough and outgoing; and girls to be homebound and shy. Gender inequality is therefore a form of inequality which is distinct from other forms of economic and social inequalities and stems from pre-existing gendered social norms and social perceptions. Gender inequality is perhaps the biggest setback of India. It can only be explained by the deadly application of the strong preference for sons over daughters through the instrumentality of sex-selective abortion, or female foeticide. Attempts to tackle female foeticide through bans on sex-determination tests imposed by legislations have remained largely ineffective. Male dominance over women is manifested in various

ways. There is disparity in wages, income, education, politics, professional choices, sexual harassment and violence.

#### **4.2 Poverty**

Women and girls are socially and economically marginalized. According to a report of the Committee constituted by the government of India to estimate nearly 38% of India's population is poor. Nearly 45 % of rural people are below poverty line. Most of them are just surviving with day to-day earnings. Under such circumstances, within the family, the worst sufferers are needless to say women and girl children. For this category of women, neither credit nor skill training is accessible. The disproportionate impact of poverty on girls is not an accident but the result of systematic discrimination.

#### **4.3 Domestic duty**

It is unfortunately true of the Indian society that children are sent to school not according to their intelligence or aptitude but according to their sex. The reasons for not sending girls to school are both economic and social. In rural areas, girls are required to help in household work. The resources of the rural poor are so limited that they do not have anything to spare for children's education. If resources

are available, it is the boy who is sent to school first. Parents also do not see the value of educating a daughter because they consider the girl child as "Parayadhan" which means somebody else's wealth and who would get married and remain a housewife.

#### **4.4 Child marriage**

As per the definition given by UNICEF, child marriage is the formal marriage or informal union entered into by an individual before reaching the age of eighteen. It is, internationally, considered as a violation of human rights. Though it is observed for both the genders, the majority of the affected population is female due to the importance placed upon female virginity. Some major factors behind this menace are poverty, cultural traditions, bride-price, religious and regional customs, social pressure, illiteracy etc. Although child marriage has been made illegal in the Indian law, the country is home to more than one-third of the child brides in the world. According to UNICEF, 47% of girls are married by 18 years of age, and 18% by 15 years of age. These marriages are often performed without the consent of the girls. Child marriage also makes girls more vulnerable to domestic violence, sexual abuse

and inability to complete primary education.

#### **4.5 Child labor**

Article 24 of the Constitution of India states, "No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or in any hazardous employment" Child labour is violation of human rights and is considered to be a 'necessary evil' in any country in the whole world. It hampers their normal and natural physical, mental, spiritual, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development. The 2011 national census of India found the total number of child laborers aged 5-14 to be 4.35 million. They are employed as workers in homes, hotels, workshops, service stations, shops, construction sites and pulling rickshaws etc. They are even working in hazardous and unhygienic forms of labour in manufacturing factories. Children are forced to enter into labour in order to increase the income of a poor family and to reduce the labor cost in a production organization. Female child is the most deprived and under privileged of the whole class of such children. Girls are not only withdrawn from schools and forced to indulge in child labour, but are even dragged into prostitution. If a child takes up a small job as a domestic helper or

restaurant boy against a nominal salary of Rs. 750-1800 per month, he/she does not get enough time for primary and secondary education and is most likely to remain illiterate, unskilled, unemployed or be engaged as an unskilled labor.

#### **4.6 Dowry system**

Dowry refers to the durable goods, cash, and real or movable property that the bride's family gives to the bridegroom, his parents, or his relatives as a condition of the marriage. Due to this financial burden, parents do not want to invest money on educating the girls; rather they would save money for the dowry. Many times brides are tortured and even murdered because the promised amount is not given. More than 95,000 women are killed every year in India over dowry. Cases of torture of women over dowry are the highest of all crimes against women in the country, accounting for 32.4%.

#### **4.7 Social evil of violence and crimes against women**

Women's struggle for dignity and rightful position begins in the womb and continues throughout a woman's life. UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women notes, "Violence against women is manifestation of historically unequal power

relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanism by which women are forced into subordinate position compared with men.”

According to National Crimes Records Bureau, Government of India in the recent past, there were over 32,000 murders, 19,000 rapes and 36,500 molestation cases are the violent crimes against women. Rape is the fastest growing crime in the country today and as many as 18 women are assaulted in every hour across India. In India human trafficking includes the exploitation women and girls by pushing them into prostitution, forced labour, child marriages, and trade in human organs and many of them become victims of HIV/AIDS.

**4.8 Lack of facilities for girls such as a separate urinals or washroom etc., lack of transport facilities and lack of qualified female teachers are the other barriers.**

**5. Importance of Education of women/girls and socio-political, economic and moral impact on the development of the country:**

Education is milestone of women empowerment because it enables them to responds to the challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. Education of women would be the most powerful tool of change of position in society. Education means an all round drawing out of the best in a person. National Public Radio is calling education “the most important revolution of our time”. When we speak of education of women and girls, we refer to education that aims at improving the knowledge and skill of women and girls. It includes general education at schools and colleges, professional and technical education, health education, etc.

Now many people have begun to realize that girls’ education is essential. The modern age is the age of awakening of girls. “Save girl and educate girl” is the slogan that we often hear. There are still many people who oppose girls’ education. They say that the proper sphere of girls is the home. So, they argue that the money spent on girl’s education is wasted. This view is wrong, because girl’s education can

bring about a silent revolution in the society. Men and Women are just like the two wheels of a chariot. They are equal in importance and they should work together in life. Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Indian prime minister rightly said, "If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a woman you educate a whole family. Women empowered means mother India empowered".

Educated women are capable of bringing socio-economic changes. Primary education is now a fundamental right in India. When a woman or a girl is ensured of her rights, the society at large is ensured of its sustainability. Realizing the importance of women education, the government and many non-government organizations are taking a lot of projects to spread women education. Education of the girls would definitely have positive impact on socio-political, economic and moral development of the country.

## **5.1 Socio – political impact**

### **5.1.1 Education will enable women to fulfill her role in the family well**

Napoleon once stated, "Nation's progress is impossible without

trained and educated mothers. If the women of my country are not educated, about half of the people will be ignorant". If woman is educated, the three roles that a woman plays in the family- the role as daughter, wife and mother, she would be able to fulfill better. There is a saying, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world". If she is educated, she will make such impression on the mind of her children that will enable them to grow into great persons. Hence, it is very necessary that women should be educated. An educated girl is more important than an educated boy.

### **5.1.2 Education will reduce Gender Gap**

Education of women can be a double edged sword. Women who gain education are working toward minimizing the gap to further the abilities of women around the world. Education creates greater awareness of the problem of gender discrimination, facilitates critical questioning of discriminatory forms of behavior and practices and enables women to stand up for their right and fight for just causes. Women can be empowered by decreasing the gender inequalities in all sectors of the society especially in education sectors. Specially designed educational



interventions are required to facilitate change in mindset, behavior and practices which will contribute to eliminating unjust gender relations. Educated women are able to make better decisions for themselves, choose their carrier, plan their families, find their status in the family and in the society. Her identity as an individual would never get lost. She will be able to read and learn about her rights. Education will certainly decrease gender gap.

### **5.1.3 Education will facilitate active participation in political arena**

As education enlightens the minds of women, their sense of patriotism and love for the country

will be enkindled. They will be able to know the history of the country, its constitutions, policies and the political problems. With the increase sense of confidence, the women will be able to participate in politics, on local, state and national level. They can assume leadership in various departments, voice their opinion, and represent the concerns of women and stand up for their rights. They will be able hold high positions and govern the country with dignity. Educated women can take active part in national and international organizations.

## **5.2 Economic impact**

### **5.2.1 Education will bring about development and prosperity**

Education provides an essential qualification to fulfill certain economic, political and cultural functions and improves women's socio-economic status. Educated women are now looked upon with dignity and honor. They become a source of inspiration for millions of young girls who make them their role-models. They will be able to serve the society as writers, educators, teachers, lawyers, doctors, administrators, politicians, scientists, government officers and much more.

### **5.2.2 Education will provide economic Growth and alleviate poverty**

Education also increases a person's chance of obtaining a steady job. So long as women remain backward and economically dependent on men, the helpless condition of them cannot be changed. Economic empowerment and independence will only come through proper education and employment of women. In order to bring about steady economic growth in a country, education must be a priority. For every year of education, a person's average earnings increase by 10%. This means that the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) could increase by 1% every year if all citizens receive a quality education.

Most of the women work in unorganized sector. If they were educated they would know the rules and regulations and can work in an organized sector and get the benefits of public schemes. If women are educated they can get training for setting up small scale industries, can know the procedure of getting loan, get the knowledge of market availability of raw material and labour, new policies of the government, procedure to register new product and knowledge about import and export of goods. If their standard of living is improved, it will indirectly uplift the level of society. If they can be financially strong, they could take proper care of their children and provide them good education. After marriage, educated girls can add to the income of their family. Education of women is a pre-requisite to alleviate poverty. There cannot be much social and economic change unless girls and women are given their rights for education.

### **5.2.3 Education will promote Health**

Educated girls and women are aware of the importance of health and hygiene. Through health education, they are empowered to lead a healthy life-style. An educated mother can take better care of both herself and her baby.

Maternal health benefits hugely from education. A child who is born to an educated mother is 50% more likely to survive. In the same way, every additional year of education of a mother lowers the child mortality rate by 2%. Educated mothers are twice as likely to immunize their children, and are more likely to seek prenatal care and assisted childbirth. For example in the state of Kerala which has the highest literacy in India, the infant mortality rate is 6% where as in India the current infant mortality rate is 41%. This is self explanatory. Another area in which health could improve with education is decreasing the cases of HIV/AIDS. If every child in the world receives a primary education, seven million cases of HIV could be avoided in the next 10 years. Secondary education lowers people's risk of HIV by 75%. Such a strong correlation has been seen that education is considered a "social vaccine" for girls in avoiding HIV.

Malnutrition is a severe problem that India is facing today. Education has the potential to decrease malnutrition. According to USAID, educating girls is one of the best ways to fight hunger and increase country's food supply. Education can provide people with new and more effective farming techniques which would increase

crop production. Studies show that if women farmers had the same education as men farmers, crop production could rise by up to 20%. Food habits of educated mothers can bring about a decrease of malnutrition of children and enhance life expectancy.

### **5.3 Influence on morality**

#### **5.3.1 Education will decrease of violence against women and promotion of justice**

Educated women are more informed of their rights for justice. It would eventually liberate women from the evils of dowry, forced-prostitution, child-marriage, female foeticide, violence, women trafficking, and child labour etc. They will be able to voice for their right and demand justice. This will create awareness, respect and fear in the society which in turn will elevate the moral standard of the society.

### **6. Contribution of Holy Cross sisters in the education of women and girls**

From the moment Holy Cross sisters set foot in the Indian soil in 1894, they have been actively involved in the cause of the empowerment of women and girls who are poor and marginalized belonging to the schedule cast

and scheduled tribes. Today we are rendering valuable service in 21 states in diverse ministries, particularly in the field of education of girls and women.

Education vision and mission statement of the Holy Cross Sisters is: "Our Mission, as compassionate leaders, is to form young women and men of character, who will distinguish themselves by their academic and professional excellence, sound Spiritual and moral values, with a holistic growth in their intellectual, emotional, physical and artistic abilities, a spirit of selfless service and leadership qualities."

Area of operation:

- Formal education- from preprimary to higher secondary 3 to 16 years
- Higher/ University education (colleges)
- Vocational training and Professional education
- Medical education and health promotion
- Education for differently able - deaf and dumb and mentally retarded children
- Non formal education and women empowerment programs, especially through Grihini schools/schools for dropout girls

- Boarding schools and hostels for girls and women of various age groups

## **7. Hand in Hand with LUCY foundation**

I am fortunate to have come to know LUCY foundation. On this occasion, I like to applaud and acknowledge the great contribution of LUCY foundation, its founder and president Mr. Norbert Scheiwe, the governing body members and all the generous donors who have joined hands with the Holy Cross Sisters and offer financial support for providing education to the girls of poor strata. I admire the vision and mission of LUCY foundation, commitment, initiative, daring spirit, loyalty, generosity and benevolence of its members. Without your valuable contribution Holy Cross sisters would not have been able to actualize many of the activities in the field of education, especially in north India. It is my pleasure to mention with gratitude some of the major institutions with which LUCY foundation collaborates.

- Holy Cross School, Bartua, Hazaribag
- St. Robert's School Hazaribag
- St. Michael's School for the hearing impaired, Hazaribag

- Holy Cross Community Hospital Tarwa
- Holy Cross School Chandil
- Holy Cross children's Home, Delhi
- AIDS awareness program, Patna
- Hostel children in West Bengal
- Rainbow – Education of the street children Bangalore
- Disabled children's education South Province, Bangalore.
- Periyavilai, -Tsunami affected village school, Tamilnadu

## **8. Way forward - Empowerment of women and girls through education**

Our vision of empowerment of women should be based on Christian anthropology, founded on the message from the Scriptures, Gen. 1.27. "Man and woman, are both created in the image and likeness of God." The equality and differentiation of women and men is based on their God given, natural, biological and specific personal constitution.

"It is impossible to think about the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is impossible for a bird to fly on

only one wing." — Swami Vivekananda

### **8.1 What is women empowerment?**

Empowerment is a multi-faceted, multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept which is described as the feeling that activates the psychological energy to accomplish one's goals. To "empower women" means to authorize power or increase the overall position, status and condition of women in every spheres of life. Women Empowerment refers to strengthening the social, economic, political and educational powers of women. It refers to an environment where there is no gender bias and women have equal rights in community, society and workplaces. According to the Government of India report, empowerment means moving from a position of enforced powerlessness to one of power. Decision making in the field of finance, child related and social issues, access to resources and freedom of movement are the most vital indicators of women empowerment.

**In this perspective, John Show International researchers (JSI) have provided six domains of empowerment:**

1. Sense of self and vision of future (Assertiveness, future-oriented plans and actions, freedom from threat of physical violence)
2. Mobility and visibility (Activities outside of the home, freedom from harassment in public spaces and interaction with men)
3. Economic Security (Property ownership, new skills and knowledge, increased income, engagement in new/non-traditional types of work)
4. Status and decision-making power within the household: Self-confidence, control in spending money, enhanced status in the family, participation in making decisions
5. Ability to interact effectively in the public sphere (Awareness of legal status and services available, ability to get access to social services, political awareness, participation in credit program, providing service in community)

6. Participation on non-family groups (Identified as a person outside of the family, forum for creating sense of solidarity with other women, self-expression and participating in groups)

### **8.2 How can we empower women in India?**

Girl's education is like sowing the seed which gives rise to green, cheerful and full grown family plant. No doubt, that women's status can be improved through empowerment. There are various awakening programs launched by the government for encouraging the girl's education. Introduction of Televisions in rural areas, 33% reservation given to females in Panchayats (local government), 30% reservation to women candidates in services, enhanced subsidy to girl entrepreneurs, various self employment schemes, like Women Entrepreneur Development Program, Self Help Groups of women have resulted in mobilizing and directing the parents to get their daughters educated. Many NGO's have launched various programs for empowering women and join hand with governments

projects aimed at empowering women.

Indeed, Holy Cross sisters in India are pioneers in education and empowerment of women and girls in the past 124 years. In a vast country like ours our contribution is like a drop in an ocean.

A few areas that we could focus more in the future could be:

- Allotting more seats in our educational institutions to girls from poor families and also to those from Scheduled caste and tribe and other backward communities.
- Providing financial assistance to support girls' basic and professional education.
- Offering job oriented programs vocational training for girls whereby they can get a job after the training and become financially self supportive.
- Motivating able girls to choose subjects according to their aptitudes and go for higher education at college and university level.
- Facilitating education in mass media and social communication, information technology etc. so that girls and women are able to access information and provide information
- Educating women and men on the constitutional rights and their legal status of women so that they can voice against gender discrimination, violence and crimes.
- Teaching self-defensive techniques, like Karate
- Providing opportunities for participating in sports, physical exercises, class on hygiene, wellness, mental health etc. which will make the women aware of their physical well being and motivate them to keep themselves and their family members healthy.
- Imparting skill based training – skills for cooking, food preservation, housekeeping, agricultural technology etc.
- Organizing self help groups, income generating programs for women which would promote sustainable livelihood.
- Making available programs for self-awareness, value education, personality development, capacity building, leadership training, management etc.

## 9. Conclusion

Affirming the importance of empowering women for the socio political economic and moral development of the country, Former Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once said, "You can tell the state of a nation by looking at the condition of the women there". Educate women and their community will prosper, deny them education and the world will suffer. According to Mahatma Gandhi, "Due to her nature, women possess the best ability to teach the child. Thus, let us start educating the female children to change the face of the society."

Yes, if the Indian women are educated, they will certainly join

hands with their counterparts and lead the country to zenith of socio-political, economic and moral development. Given good and higher education to women and girls, India will rise up as one of the most civilized and progressive nations of the world. We can dream of better days when all women of India will be educated, enlightened and can hold their heads high.

### References:

No more silence-Countering sexual harassment and violence against women by Tresa Paul SCSC

Article: Women in India, Role and Status of Women in India on October 27, 2015, by Kiran

Article: Status of Women Education in India by Dr. Jitendra Kumar & Ms. Sangeeta

## 10 Years of Province Europa Mitte

Sr. Magdalena Walcher, Wels, Province Europa Mitte

The Europa Mitte Province took shape in 2007 when seven provinces and a vicariate coalesced into a new territorial unit. Review was held on three different occasions.



Meeting of the Provincial Team with the managers

### The Province Europa Mitte

"I will give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11). With this promise of God, on 4th October, 2007, the feast of our patron saint St. Francis, the founding of the "Province Europa Mitte" took place. The former provinces of Upper Austria-Salzburg, Styria-Carinthia, Tyrol-Vorarlberg, Vienna-Lower Austria, Bavaria, Hungary and the Vicariate Slovenia were merged into a new province. With gratitude, in October 2017, we reflected on the guidance of God. We celebrated the 10th anniversary of our

merged existence with the Managing Directors, the persons responsible for our convents, and the surviving former Provincial Superiors.

### Managing Directors' Meeting in the Provincial House Wels on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2017

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary, we invited our 22 Managing Directors to a day of meeting. A short film at the beginning reminded the assembly of the story of the Holy Cross Sisters. Based on the historical roots is the "wake-up call" which we prepared in the Provincial

Leadership (guidelines with trend-setting attitudes in our works and appropriate steps of action). With the motto, "taking new paths", we attempted to spell out the apostolic mission to "serve people and make the Gospel tangible" for our co-workers today. It was an effort to strengthen the managing directors as essential supporters of the Holy Cross Sisters' values and creators of a Christian corporate culture. In group work, in the plenum, and talks during the interval, there were lively exchanges of experiences and challenges. The climax of the meeting was a solemn noon prayer in the provincial house chapel with the handing over of

the newly planned "wake-up call", and its mission. The festive lunch underscored character of the celebration.

### **Superiors' Meeting from 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> October in St. Klara, Vöcklabruck**

The Superiors met for the regular meeting in Vöcklabruck on the theme: "How to take up new paths". The evening of the 2nd day was scheduled for the anniversary celebration. As part of the vespers, we gratefully looked back at the time we had spent, reminding us of the beginnings and milestones of our 10-year history.



Superiors' meeting

Afterwards during the happy hour, we flagged off the jubilee celebrations with a glass of wine.

### **"Rose Jubilee" on 11<sup>th</sup> /12<sup>th</sup> October**

The former Provincial Superiors from the former provinces and the vicariate were delighted to celebrate their own jubilee event. In the Provincial House, we thematically, liturgically and socially organized a get-together. Of the 20 surviving Provincial Superiors at least 13 sisters could be present at this unique meeting. The joy of the meeting with one another was great. The evening

was filled with an amusing look back at the terms of office based on original photos and stories about challenges and lived experiences. It was astonishing that in almost all provinces there were the same great themes at the same time: search for a spiritual awakening in the 70s and 80s, consultations and decisions for a good future for sisters and for actions, pursuing the process of merging of provinces.

On the second half day, we had a look at the 10-year history of the province of PEM (Province Europa Mitte): What has grown during this period what has



Former Provincial Superiors:

Sr. M. Andrea, Sr. Friedhilde, Sr. Pauline, Sr. Illuminata, Sr. Hildburg, Sr. M. Salesia, Sr. Francesca, Sr. Gabriele, Sr. Josefa Maria, Sr. Maria Bosco, Sr. Mechtild, Sr. Terezija, Sr. Maria Magdalena

changed in the communities, the activities. As an illustration, a puzzle from seven parts was created, showing "Our province on the way." The following challenges made us aware of the abundance of events and we were grateful for:

- **The process of merging of the province:** In the beginning there were struggles to strengthen the link between different cultures and to develop something new together. Creative opportunities were offered to sisters to get to know each other. This resulted in many sisterly contacts and cordial relationships.
- **Our common path:** Focal points from the General and Provincial Chapters, from the Provincial Congresses, Superiors' Meetings, jubilees and working groups shaped our way and promoted our growing together into a new province.
- **Our sisters:** At the founding of the province, we were 809 sisters, today we are 503 sisters. The passing from this world, departures, new entrants, and those returning from the mission shaped our province community.

- **Our apostolate:** At the beginning there were about 4200 co-workers, today in the 41 areas of apostolate, there are about 7200 co-workers. With them we have created guidelines and mission statements. In order to keep alive, despite the decline of the Holy Cross Sisters in the apostolate, the spiritual-social and ecological orientation in our institutions under the motto "walking new paths".
- **Impulses on the spiritual path** were the annual thematic organized community days before the retreat for deepening our spirituality and our charism.
- **Farewell and new beginning of communities:** In 10 years over 30 fields of activity were closed and two new communities established.
- **Future vision:** Based on the promise of God, we always want to venture into new ways, attentive to the needs of our time.

During the solemn Mass, we offered our thanks to God with symbolic gifts: cross, charism script and incense. The connecting, lived spirituality, made an impact on our common path. The jubilee ended with a festive meal.

## Art as a Spiritual Place

Sr. Regina Lehmann, Hegne, Province Baden-Württemberg

If the term "spiritual place" is understood broadly, then it reaches into different areas of life, especially those of creativity. Sr. Regina is an artist and runs a creative workshop in Hegne. Her reflections inspire us to enter into another dimension of life.

### **All life is movement, development, growth**

With our **Vision 2020** "To develop our communities as spiritual places and to walk with the people", we sisters too are, personally and as a whole community in the middle of a life process. "You must become the change you wish to see in the world," says Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948).

To be and to remain in this development - according to our Founder's Word: "The need of the time is the will of God" - is the place where we work, however it applies in a special way to the individual, and to us as a community.

Experiencing spiritual places / communities is particularly important for modern man, who is distracted and consumed by so many tasks, expectations and challenges. He needs an inner

point of reference, a place of power that gives him support and feeds him, a core from which he lives. More than ever it is important to live holistically, to open up and strengthen our inner sources.

### **What can help, support us in this process?**

Movement, development, growth ... is an interaction of people and places. They can influence and enrich each other.

One way to do this can be art, creativity - where creativity is not just about painting and creating. I refer to this area in my thoughts and explanations because it is a path that is clear for me and for many people I work with.

### **Living holistically - Discover creativity as spiritual vitality**

Creativity is the central expression of life and a power. It deeply

resonates with the human mind and gains special significance in our materialistic and technological world. Man is designed for wholeness, and is most likely to find happiness and fulfilment if he can live holistically, that is, if logic and intuition, reason and imagination, body and soul are in harmony and stimulate each other. All areas are created in us and can, if allowed, be awakened and unfolded. In Genesis 17: 1 we read, "Walk before me, and be blameless."

The creative drive lives in every human being. So I do not need to go to school to re-learn creativity, it is grounded in me. All I have to do is look into myself and dare to express what touched me. And learning to express is only a matter of checking out, experimenting and attempting. Letting myself into the flow of possibilities is the surest way to make something happen.

"All life is energy and energy wants to flow and express. It's not so important what is expressed and created, but rather that the creative flow begins to flow at all."(Alexander Jeanmaire, the

Creative Spark, 2009) The flow of doing, of shaping is more important than the result.

Creativity comes from "creare" and means "create".

To whom could we ascribe this power better than our Creator, the "spiritus creator", the Creator Spirit, as it is named in a Pentecostal hymn? Creativity and spirituality converge. In **creative action, we are in communion with our Creator and are in contact with the divine core in us**. God has the gift of being creative in us. Everyone can be creative in his own way; be it cooking, writing, dancing, playing music, and solving problems ... Our life gives us the opportunity to do so.

God is a God of the living. He has created the world with so many colours and shapes, enticing scents and possibilities of enjoyment and design. The creation is given to us to enjoy. We may experience it with our whole being.

Our reality, that's now, the nature, seeing things, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, understanding ... it means to be creative, to be

alive. What I gently touch in astonishment touches me, communicates something of itself, of its essence. I am allowed to experience the beauty of things and sense their message to us - give and take. That's the essence.

This sense of being touched expresses itself, wants to take shape, be it in the word, in the movement, in the dance, in the music, in the picture, in the cooking... In doing so, I can trust my intuition. In my work I search and find constantly. **There is no wrong and right, because it is my inner experience, something of mine that wanted to come to light.**

To live with all senses, to touch life with the whole being ultimately means, to encounter oneself and the author of life. It is prayer with spirit and body, and as we do it we are before God. We are in touch with our centre, in touch with God Himself.

Irenaeus of Lyon puts it this way: "The glory of God is the living being."

"When we open up to this creativity, we open ourselves to

the creativity of the Creator in us and in our life. Creativity is God's gift to us. The use of our creativity is the gift we give back to God."  
(Julia Cameron)

Let us trust our vitality and use it.

### **Effect of art on the viewer**

A place, a space has an effect on us. It can be breath-taking and make us go "wow"! It can make us happy or moody. Likewise, works of art affect us human beings. It can shape a space and increase the order and effect of a room and its effect on the human beings. We feel it especially in churches. Through space, through art, I can come into contact with a reality which points beyond me to something greater, to God the Creator of all life.

Art is a language of the artist, which demands an answer, a reaction. Through his work, I come into contact with him without words, and also with myself. Art is an offer for (inner) conversation for dealing with myself and with the statement of the image, of the work of art.

The Benedictine monk and artist, Meinrad Duffner says: "Every day a window opens to something beautiful. These are simple forms of soul's expressions when I open this window. Beauty is spiritual greatness that can only be grasped with the mind". (Meinrad Duffner, Creation, 2007).

Such a window is the encounter with art - as we try it here in the convent Hegne, in the Hotel St. Elisabeth, in the education department - be it in the form of exhibitions, painting and design courses, with music, concerts, singing, movement, dance, writing, etc.

### **Experience in creative offers**

When the participants begin to paint and get involved in the process that begins involuntarily

while painting, they find inner peace. Their inner strength gains space. They forget everything around them; they are totally with themselves and their creative process.

The product is not the most important thing, but the inner experience while doing it.

The painter, Alexander Jeanmaire writes in his book, "the Creative Spark":

"Draw a picture, and as the picture grows, something will grow in you. When the picture gets done slowly, when you apply the last brushstrokes, you will not be the same person anymore. You apply the last brushstrokes to something that is completely new to you. God has given you the chance to be creative. Life is an opportunity for that. If you are creative, you will be happy."

## **My Image "Free Flight to God"** **2016, acrylic / canvas, 120x120 cm**

Sr. Regina Lehmann, Hegne convent, Province Baden Württemberg

### **My experiences of painting the picture**

Various saying of Sr. Ulrika have inspired me to paint this picture. I felt in all her messages her strong longing for God, to be more and more connected to Him, to be secure in Him, to rest completely in Him.

I found all her yearning bundled in her words: "We have no lasting place here on earth. And therefore, we have to walk and free ourselves of everything that is in the world and anything that still keeps our heart from taking free flight to God."

These words acted as an impulse for me. I started to paint without any other concrete idea. The only guiding impulse being that it should be a movement towards light, nothing more, nothing concrete.

During the painting, a process took place: ideas, difficulties,

changes, and misfortunes that wanted to be involved, repainting some spots, developing new forms and colors, movements, enthusiasm, surprises...

The picture evolved, changed. It grew in me and on the screen in constant confrontation with myself, with the matter and the message of Sr. Ulrika.

### **Thoughts about the picture**

What was meaningful for Sr. Ulrika is also important for me, and for all of us.

I live in the present with everything that includes beauty and difficulty, brightness and darkness (lower, dark area of the picture).

But God is there - in me - around me. He always comes to me, into my life with everything that belongs to me. And I always move towards him, the light, as I am (light, brightness from the top left coming directly into the dark spiral



and the movement from the spiral up into the light).

Sr. Ulrika's yearning was to experience this connection ever deeper, to experience it in all its fullness. It is also my/our deep longing.

Staying in this relationship and trying to live out her power day after day is a great asset. This wealth, this treasure radiates, works into the world - in my concrete place where I live (movement to the right edge of the picture).

Some of my thoughts and experiences, inspired by Sr. Ulrika's words, have been set in motion throughout my painting. At the end of the painting, I realized: My relationship with Sr. Ulrika has changed, and certainly myself too. Would this have happened without painting?

### **Final thought**

It's really true! After painting, I realize I'm not quite the same as

before, something has happened to me, within me, beyond that I can't define it exactly.

Because everything we encounter, everything we do, especially when we are guided by our inner strength, has an effect on us. We are in touch with the "Spirit Creator", and experience and develop the spiritual place in us. Thus change, movement and vitality continue.

## My Stone as Spiritual Thought-Provoking Impulse

Sr. Wiltrud List, Convent Graz, Province Europa Mitte

Sr. Wiltrud works in the convent, Graz, as a versatile artist who also introduces other people into the arts with her offers.

Because I am a down-to-earth human being, many things in nature are for me mental, spiritual, and divine impulses. God's creation is always in a relationship with the Creator. This also finds expression in my artistic work. The process of designing itself gives me a lot of time to delve into the background of the theme.

A prototype of created thing for me is the stone. It is the solid part of the ground, but can turn into fertile land, when it weathers into soil. It is the foundation on which many things are built: the house built on rock. Peter the rock, on which the church is built.

I read in the Bible "God also lifts me up onto the rock". In my life, God himself is the rock on which I rest, who gives me support, who is firm in the ebb and flow. He is the fixed point, the landmark on which I orient myself.

From an early age man knew how to interpret the rock as a special place. I know many stones that have preserved traces of having



been used for worship.

The stone of my portrayal, which stands on the firm ground, is a mark that juts out into the sky. It shows traces of the work of man who gave it form which points beyond itself. But the opening in its centre also gives the view into the infinite space that lies above me and dwells within me. It opens a window of God who is around me and dwells in me.

## Art as Proclamation

### "Ordeifer" - Outside Space and Time

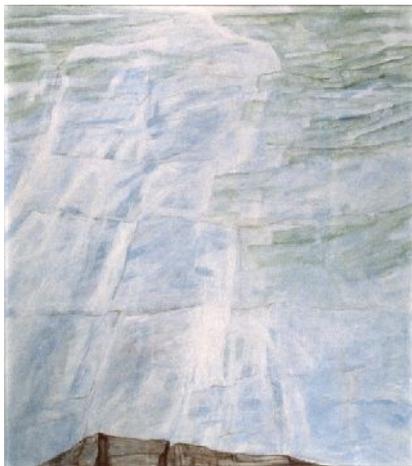
Acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 cm, 1985

Sr. Gielia Degonda, Theresianum, Ingenbohl, Mother Province Switzerland

Sr. Gielia is a graphic artist by profession, has taught drawing and designing in Theresianum for many years, has always been active publicly and had her work exhibited in galleries.

Paul Klee says: "Art does not reflect the visible, but makes visible." What we mean here is the nature of our perception only through knowledge: we do not yet see when we see. Real seeing means to behold and discover one's own inner self.

Great murals of the Romanesque period are preserved to this day: profound evidence of how people at that time saw the biblical



scenes, how they could find themselves and God by "a look to discover".

Have we lost this "ability to see" today - are we lacking the necessary silence today - are images only used to attune us to the word?

Language helps us to understand an image, but an image also has its own language.

The Vision 2020 "spiritual places" could motivate us to rethink imagery and encourage us to rediscover real and contemporary art - even as proclamation.

In the image titled "Ordeifer", (Romanesque, translated into German: outside space and time), a human figure is indicated. It seems to be almost invisibly distant - but stands out on rocky ground, stands between worlds.... This image is neither concrete nor abstract, but wants to make visible to the viewer a basic idea in order to let her find her own interpretations and contents.

## Meeting of the General Leaderships of Ingenbohl and Menzingen

Sr. Dorothee Halbach, General Leadership, Ingenbohl

Meetings of the General Leaderships of Ingenbohl and Menzingen have a tradition. Our common origin brings with it similar issues to connect. The focus of our Vision 2020 comes into play. A special spiritual place!

It was a "white Christmas", more or less, this year. We experienced on 18 December a "white" pre-Christmas, the day of our meeting with the sisters of the General Leadership, Menzingen.

Already in the morning around 10.00 o'clock, the meeting began with "coffee", and an intensive exchange. There was a lively conversation on current issues, issues that move us in our mission and affect our



At the reception



In the studio of Sr. Gielia (middle)

provinces / vicariates. We were amazed at how quickly an atmosphere of **trust** and **openness** developed.

What issues / processes are leading us at present?

Where and how are we moving in our two big international communities?

On the way we come up with questions that cannot be answered immediately and with our current understandings, which allows us to look forward and move on. Restructuring

processes, changes and the experienced cultural diversity in our provinces and vicariates are both a challenge and an opportunity.

After lunch together, Sr. Gielia Degonda took us to her painting studio and gave impressive and very personal explanations about some of her paintings.

The common day was marked by **hope** that became tangible in our mutual sharing and participation. It was rounded off with a common



Exchange during meal

prayer time and subsequent meeting with the whole Generalate community.

"Immanuel" - God is with us in our twin communities that have now some joint ventures in specific

missions, such as within the areas of formation in Western Europe and in India. That gives **courage!**

It was a good sign that, at the end of our meeting, we expressed a desire **to keep in touch.**

## Among Refugees in Sicily

Sr. Veera Bara from Vicariate Uganda, in Caltanissetta, Sicily

Sr. Veera reports at intervals from her service to refugees in Sicily. She represents our global community in the migrant project of the UISG, which emerged as a symbolic gesture in response to the appeal of Pope Francis.

As I am in the third year in this project of UISG in Sicily, I want to enrich you once again with the news and experiences. By now the migrants have never stopped entering in Italy particularly in Sicily. The international news continues updating us with the latest news of migrants who are arriving through seas, facing terrible storms and winds. Hundreds of them have lost their

lives while crossing the Mediterranean Sea, thousands have been rescued and thousands others are still waiting in Libya to enter into Europe. More than 180,000 people arrived in Italy via this route in the year 2017. Those who have crossed the sea have been sheltered in different welcoming and refugee centers. They have many life stories to narrate with tears and



On the left: Sr. Vera



His shelter

gratefulness for the life that is saved. More than 15,000 migrants stranded in Libya by now, are desperately trying to escape war, persecution and poverty in African countries, are mostly trafficked for the cheap labour, sex exploitation and for slave trade. Yes it is not that one chooses to risk into the rough sea, but the migrants are forced into it. They are crying for liberation and freedom from such bondage like the Israelites who were crying in Egypt 2000 years ago. One of the migrants said: "You stay there and you see your

fellow human beings being killed like animals by saying, you aren't humans."

Hundreds of young sub-Saharan African men have been caught up in the so-called slave markets. A Senegalese migrant said that he had been sold at one such market in the southern Libyan city of Sabha, before being taken to a makeshift prison where more than 100 migrants were being held hostage. He said that migrants held at the facility were told to call their families, who would be asked for money to pay for their release, and some were beaten while on the phone to allow relatives to hear them being tortured. These testimonies paint a horrifying picture of the lives of refugees and other migrants in Libya.

The "Church's concern for the sad situation of so many migrants and refugees fleeing wars, persecution, natural disasters and poverty" this is what has pushed Pope Francis to express his attention to this "signs of the times" in a variety of ways since his visits to Lampedusa in one of Islands in Italy in 2013 . He gives a very powerful message for the

World day of Migrants on 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2018, **“Welcoming, Protecting, Promoting and Integrating Migrants and Refugees”**. I can imagine if our founder Fr. Theodosius Florentini would be alive, surely he would have been one of the first one, who would have implemented this message of Pope Francis without hesitation and delay by saying “The need of time is the will of God”

So following his motto here we visit them in the refugee centers, on the streets, under the bridge living in very small tents, in rented houses if they afford to hire, in the hospitals, in the churches, in the school, in the markets, etc. We are to witness, to see, to listen, to understand, to counsel, to support and to let them know that we are with them. Our mission is not so much giving but being with them in their brokenness.

To extend the healing and soothing touch to their open wounds, to seek justice and affirm that they are purely humans like any of us. We encounter many who are physically and mentally sick, many frustrated due to lack

of money, documents, jobs, houses and family members.

Some of them literally run away from one country to another, from one city to another, when they are not given documents as asylum seekers or refugees. There are many refugees who manage to bring their family members to be together and struggle to sustain them with the basic needs, though



Child refugees

government gives free education and treatments.

The Italian class which we give for men and women assist them in daily situation like in the hospitals, markets, schools, offices etc. We also assist them to integrate with the local people by imparting knowledge on culture and traditions. The regular mass in English on every Sunday is a great achievement for the migrants, who gather in our parish one hour before the mass, to praise and worship, and to listen and understand the Sunday readings. Time to time ecumenical prayers with Muslim brothers and sisters enable us to have union in one God. This reminds me the words of our founder, "Under the sun everyone is my brother and sister."

Our main objective of the project is to be a bridge between the two nationalities, two cultures, between authorities and migrants, we fulfil it by speaking for the migrants in the offices for justice, translate where the migrant is not able to express what he needs, our prophetic presence among the

poor and for the poor, motivates the rich to share with the poor.

I feel extremely fortunate and blessed to share the charism of our congregation in this island, though sometimes the fact of being away from my own institute and loved ones torture me badly. I thank Sr. Marija, our Superior General and all of you my dear sisters who accompany me through your prayers and encouragement. The challenges of community life in the inter-congregational, is as usual as in any normal community, but the Words of our Foundress "With God and for God everything is possible" leads me every day. I extend my sincere thanks to the well wishers and lovers of migrants and refugees - the Superior Generals from Western Europe, our friends and sisters from USA province, and sisters and benefactors from Europa Mitte who assisted us in our mission with financial support.

Let us remember what the present Pontiff says, "The Holy Mother of God herself experienced the hardship of exile (Mathew 2:13-15) lovingly accompanied her Son's journey to Calvary." May we all learn to love the other, the stranger as ourselves!

## Information from the General Leadership

### Appointments

On 7th December, 2017, the General Leadership reappointed USA Provincial Leadership for three years:

Provincial Superior: Sr. Pat Cormack  
Assistant: Sr. Carol Crosby  
Councilors: Sr. Kathy Wiesneski  
Sr. Linda Songy  
Official start: 8th June, 2018

We sincerely thank our four sisters for their readiness to accept this demanding mission in the manifold challenges and change processes of the province. We wish them courage, strength and confidence for their work for the good of the sisters and the province. God bless them in their planning and action.

### General Visitation

In the province of the Czech Republic, the General Visitation is scheduled from 1 to 26 May, 2018. Sr. Marija Brizar, Sr. Lucila Zovak and Sr. Sheeja Kolacheril will conduct the visitation and meet the sisters in the places where, day by day, as individuals and as a community they try to put into practice the charism of our Congregation. May God's good Spirit accompany all during

visitation, all those involved in the meetings as well as in the dialogues and deliberations!

### From our Statistics

| Date 31 December, 2017 |      |
|------------------------|------|
| Pre-candidates         | 73   |
| Candidates             | 120  |
| Postulants             | 33   |
| Novices                | 44   |
| Entered novitiate      | 31   |
| First profession       | 33   |
| Final profession       | 19   |
| Total sisters          | 3059 |
| Total communities      | 338  |

### On one's own account

Often in the communities, cheerful stories are told that make you smile: stories from life that just happened. And at all times there have been originals among us whose stories are told, even if the sisters have already died. In Theodosia, short stories, experiences and memories will soon be published on a separate page. Let's tell each other about events that add a cheerful note to everyday life! The editors are happy to accept such contributions.

## Entered into Eternal Life

From January 1-31 December 2017



---

| Sister | Native place | Born | Prof. | Died |
|--------|--------------|------|-------|------|
|--------|--------------|------|-------|------|

---

### Motherprovince Switzerland

|                        |                |      |      |            |
|------------------------|----------------|------|------|------------|
| Angela Maria Oechslin  | Einsiedeln SZ  | 1920 | 1949 | 24.05.2017 |
| Armida Schegg          | Oberriet SG    | 1937 | 1963 | 21.03.2017 |
| Bernardina Figus       | itzo Italien   | 1926 | 1961 | 20.04.2017 |
| Delia Kunz             | Dornach SO     | 1935 | 1964 | 31.01.2017 |
| Elred Peng             | Vals GR        | 1933 | 1958 | 03.02.2017 |
| Franziska Künzi        | Würenlingen AG | 1929 | 1955 | 14.10.2017 |
| Giulia Maria Ferracini | Russo TI       | 1922 | 1946 | 26.09.2017 |
| Marie Christine Scheib | Widnau SG      | 1942 | 1974 | 13.08.2017 |
| M. Xaveria Kessler     | Düdingen FR    | 1919 | 1947 | 27.06.2017 |
| Marziana Germann       | Muolen SG      | 1937 | 1960 | 17.10.2017 |
| Matelda Deppeler       | Tegerfelden AG | 1924 | 1950 | 22.12.2017 |

|                     |                    |      |      |            |
|---------------------|--------------------|------|------|------------|
| Meta Bruggisser     | Wohlen AG          | 1933 | 1958 | 01.04.2017 |
| Monica Teresa Solcà | Coldrerio TI       | 1949 | 1980 | 19.10.2017 |
| Pierina Maria Togni | Brione-Verzasca TI | 1925 | 1948 | 17.04.2017 |
| Ruth Maria Fitz     | Oberuzwil SG       | 1923 | 1953 | 05.10.2017 |
| Virginia Häfliger   | Römerswil LU       | 1923 | 1960 | 27.04.2017 |

### Province Croatia

|                    |                  |      |      |            |
|--------------------|------------------|------|------|------------|
| Agneta Pilaj       | Dragoslavec      | 1928 | 1960 | 13.05.2017 |
| Danica Hans        | Klju             | 1937 | 1958 | 03.07.2017 |
| Eulogija Pavin     | Podr.Moslavina   | 1928 | 1951 | 08.11.2017 |
| Izabela Janji      | Vidovice BiH     | 1931 | 1953 | 18.10.2017 |
| Jelka Ileš         | Pod. Moslavina   | 1932 | 1953 | 10.04.2017 |
| Kapistrana Kuzman  | Donje Krasno BiH | 1937 | 1961 | 03.07.2017 |
| Marta Lovrekovi    | Brodski Varoš    | 1924 | 1950 | 17.07.2017 |
| Melanka Jemri      | Šiškovci         | 1923 | 1945 | 16.11.2017 |
| Tješislava Bucovac | Široko Kula      | 1924 | 1951 | 25.12.2017 |

### Czech Province

|                     |                   |      |      |            |
|---------------------|-------------------|------|------|------------|
| Deodata Poznerová   | Spytihn v         | 1917 | 1938 | 07.01.2017 |
| Hedvika Du perková  | Valašské Mezi í í | 1921 | 1978 | 10.08.2017 |
| Vilibalda Vaší ková | Javorovec         | 1921 | 1944 | 07.03.2017 |

### Province Baden-Württemberg

|                       |               |      |      |            |
|-----------------------|---------------|------|------|------------|
| Anna Rosa Vogt        | Oedsbach      | 1929 | 1957 | 09.12.2017 |
| Friedburga Tritschler | Schwärzenbach | 1924 | 1955 | 27.03.2017 |
| M. Augusta Klumpp     | Mösbach       | 1929 | 1959 | 11.04.2017 |
| M. Bilhildis Leicher  | Heimbach      | 1927 | 1959 | 04.04.2017 |
| M. Tarzisia Leitner   | Basel CH      | 1933 | 1957 | 10.11.2017 |
| Mathilde Kopp         | Markdorf      | 1933 | 1961 | 25.03.2017 |
| Ursulina Säger        | Villingen     | 1922 | 1948 | 09.11.2017 |

### Province Slovakia

|                  |                   |      |      |            |
|------------------|-------------------|------|------|------------|
| Alfonza Mikušová | Ratkovce          | 1924 | 1946 | 15.10.2017 |
| Flávia Sabolová  | Bukovec           | 1931 | 1954 | 23.11.2017 |
| Lea Kup ová      | H. K a any        | 1932 | 1953 | 25.03.2017 |
| Martina Krupová  | Trstená           | 1960 | 1984 | 28.07.2017 |
| Tamaris Valeková | Považská Bystrica | 1926 | 1954 | 23.03.2017 |

## Province Italy

|                      |                 |      |      |            |
|----------------------|-----------------|------|------|------------|
| Claudia Lupi         | Vaprio d'Adda   | 1943 | 1970 | 15.02.2017 |
| Fiorenza Lampe       | Visne, Slovenia | 1928 | 1951 | 16.06.2017 |
| Gilberta Foglia      | Cairate         | 1926 | 1951 | 15.01.2017 |
| Natalia Galetti      | Solaro          | 1929 | 1952 | 07.04.2017 |
| Teresa Maria Terrana | Montedoro       | 1936 | 1957 | 14.07.2017 |

## Province West Switzerland

|                         |                |      |      |            |
|-------------------------|----------------|------|------|------------|
| Ida Cattin              | Le Noirmont JU | 1933 | 1958 | 13.03.2017 |
| Jeanne d'Arc Murith     | Gruyères FR    | 1917 | 1942 | 29.04.2017 |
| Judith Berther          | Disla GR       | 1940 | 1964 | 04.12.2017 |
| Marie-Claire Thorimbert | Grangette FR   | 1919 | 1944 | 03.04.2017 |

## Province USA

|                      |                      |      |      |            |
|----------------------|----------------------|------|------|------------|
| Adele Wehri          | Hebron, North Dakota | 1925 | 1950 | 19.06.2017 |
| Ann Wittman          | Merrill, Wisconsin   | 1927 | 1949 | 08.12.2017 |
| Mary Anthony Menting | Phlox, Wisconsin     | 1931 | 1953 | 09.02.2017 |

## Central Province India

|                 |                     |      |      |            |
|-----------------|---------------------|------|------|------------|
| Bernadette Xaxa | Mahuadanr Jharkh.   | 1935 | 1960 | 29.06.2017 |
| Damian Minj     | Gholeng, Chhattisg. | 1939 | 1965 | 17.12.2017 |

## Mid India Province

|              |                   |      |      |            |
|--------------|-------------------|------|------|------------|
| Silbina Ekka | Chainpur, Jharkh. | 1947 | 1984 | 29.07.2017 |
|--------------|-------------------|------|------|------------|

## Province Europa Mitte

|                     |                    |      |      |            |
|---------------------|--------------------|------|------|------------|
| Acella Tomasek      | Csütörtök HU       | 1925 | 1947 | 26.05.2017 |
| Agnes Maria Bischof | Sonntag, Vbg.      | 1929 | 1959 | 12.05.2017 |
| Alberta Senft       | Dürnberg, Bayern   | 1925 | 1953 | 07.03.2017 |
| Alma Hemetsberger   | Vöcklamarkt OÖ     | 1919 | 1948 | 29.01.2017 |
| Armella Linzmeier   | Hammern, Böhmen    | 1931 | 1957 | 11.03.2017 |
| Angela Heilek       | Budapest HU        | 1915 | 1939 | 05.11.2017 |
| Christiana Ganser   | St. Veit/Mkr. OÖ   | 1926 | 1958 | 29.10.2017 |
| Christiana Ruider   | Götzendorf, Bayern | 1934 | 1960 | 06.06.2017 |
| Elia Lekse          | Groblje, Slowenien | 1931 | 1962 | 07.04.2017 |

|                              |                          |      |      |            |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|------|------|------------|
| Eucharista Hauser            | St. Georgen/Gusen OÖ     | 1922 | 1952 | 10.01.2017 |
| Eugenia Zieher               | Vöcklamarkt OÖ           | 1919 | 1948 | 25.01.2017 |
| Eva Maria Allinger           | Brand, NÖ                | 1938 | 1961 | 25.11.2017 |
| Ferdinanda Kühne             | Meinigen, Vbg.           | 1916 | 1943 | 08.03.2017 |
| Ferdinanda Sattler           | Gro prethal/Obdach Stm.  | 1938 | 1960 | 19.10.2017 |
| Fridburga Stefan             | Griffen Ktn.             | 1923 | 1952 | 21.11.2017 |
| Friedburga Hiesmair          | Hargelsberg OÖ           | 1921 | 1948 | 22.08.2017 |
| Gemma Neumann                | Bernhardstal, NÖ         | 1937 | 1960 | 31.12.2017 |
| Germana Bertsch              | Raggal, Vbg.             | 1930 | 1956 | 31.03.2017 |
| Hadwig Dunin-Rzuchowski      | Lodz, Polen              | 1930 | 1962 | 28.11.2017 |
| Hemma Reiterer               | Schiefing i. L. Ktn.     | 1935 | 1963 | 24.05.2017 |
| Hermann Josefa Bredschneider | Zuckmantel, Böhmen       | 1919 | 1941 | 09.06.2017 |
| Imeldis Pietschmann          | Tetschen, Böhmen         | 1921 | 1950 | 05.10.2017 |
| Irmgard Steyrl               | Rohrbach, OÖ             | 1936 | 1961 | 21.07.2017 |
| Irmira Kunstädter            | Hall, Tirol              | 1935 | 1956 | 27.11.2017 |
| Isabella Truppe              | Maria Feicht, Ktn.       | 1936 | 1959 | 28.04.2017 |
| Jakobe Stummer               | Kleinzell OÖ             | 1943 | 1965 | 10.10.2017 |
| Jerneja Kranjec              | Velika Polana SLO        | 1929 | 1950 | 23.01.2017 |
| Julia Obernberger            | Schlierbach OÖ           | 1927 | 1948 | 04.04.2017 |
| Kandida Gamper               | Partschins, Bozen I      | 1928 | 1954 | 21.03.2017 |
| Klarissza Kakuszi            | Szedeg HU                | 1926 | 1959 | 16.02.2017 |
| Luzia Dallasera              | Oberlienz Ti             | 1929 | 1952 | 13.02.2017 |
| M. Beatrix Pollak            | Voitsberg, Stmk.         | 1928 | 1949 | 12.06.2017 |
| Maria Imelda Schwärzler      | Lingenau Vbg.            | 1925 | 1946 | 23.11.2017 |
| Marina Holzmüller            | Prambachkirchen OÖ       | 1928 | 1956 | 06.06.2017 |
| Martha Posch                 | Kleinfelgitschberg Stmk. | 1936 | 1963 | 26.11.2017 |
| Melanie Lasser               | Laakirchen OÖ            | 1918 | 1939 | 25.01.2017 |
| Maura Diendorfer             | Peilstein OÖ             | 1927 | 1956 | 12.04.2017 |
| Nežka Biš ani                | Brežice SLO              | 1940 | 1964 | 24.01.2017 |
| Notburga Säckl               | Schwanhof, Bayern        | 1930 | 1955 | 10.03.2017 |
| Regina Lins                  | Oberbibrach, Bayern      | 1943 | 1967 | 21.08.2017 |
| Reinlindis Graf              | Eckendorf, Bayern        | 1931 | 1955 | 08.11.2017 |
| Silveria Bischof             | Sonntag, Vbg.            | 1922 | 1949 | 17.05.2017 |
| Tarcisia Metzler             | Bizau, Vbg.              | 1926 | 1951 | 11.03.2017 |
| Thekla Steffan               | Semriach / Graz Stmk.    | 1926 | 1950 | 10.12.2017 |
| Theresia Martin              | Nieder-Absdorf NÖ        | 1931 | 1953 | 29.06.2017 |
| Ubalda Fölser                | Puchenau OÖ              | 1930 | 1960 | 06.10.2017 |
| Veronika Wilhelm             | Mitteraich, Bayern       | 1936 | 1957 | 01.01.2017 |

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