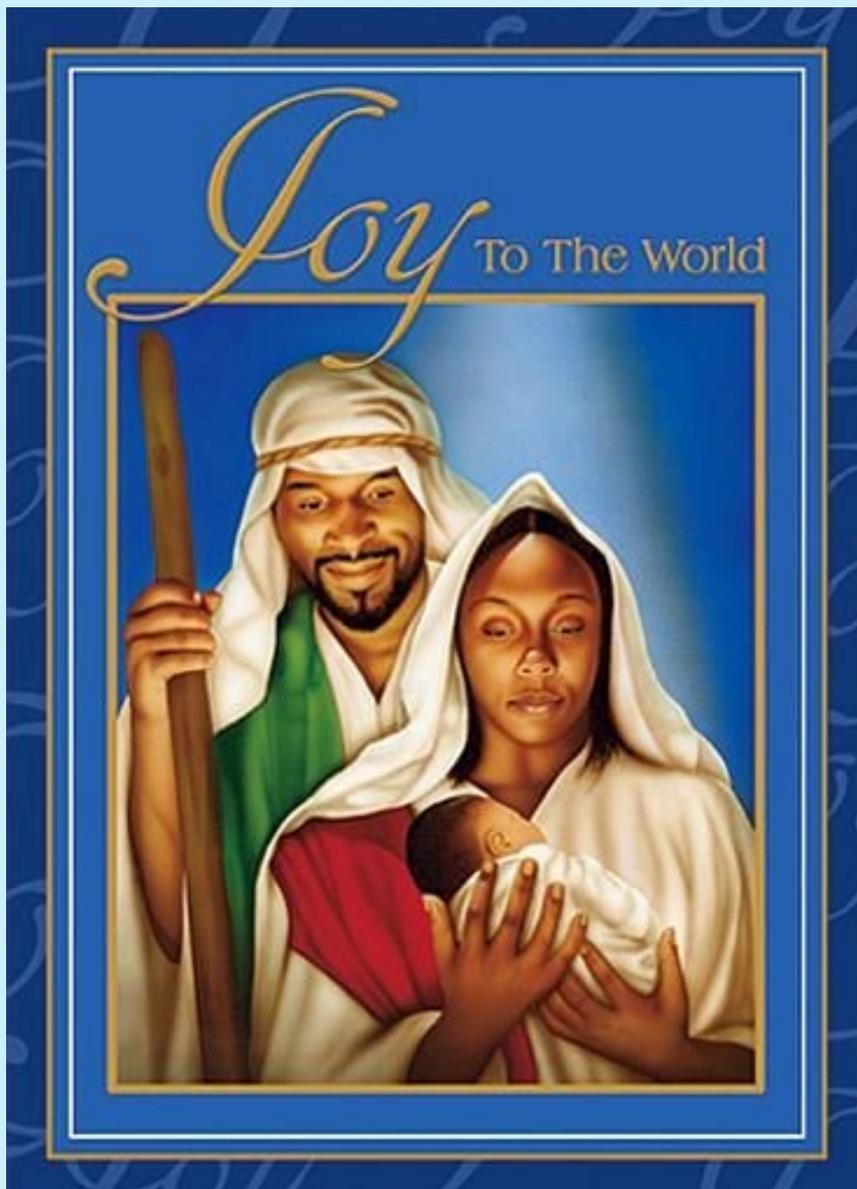


# KEEPING IN TOUCH

SSHJM



DECEMBER 2020



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## *Editorial*

*We complete this year of 2020 with our Christmas celebrations and pray that 2021 will be safer for us all in the world. There is the hope of vaccinations which, God willing, will allow us to go forward with the General Chapter later this year.*

*In the past few months life has been as busy as usual but with continued precautions. Sr Lucy, like sister Luella, professed her final Vows behind a mask and then went on to graduate at college (p. 5). Sister Trinitor's graduation was 'virtual' and sister Esther Suico eventually made it back to Cebu after many delays. She did make time to write about her experiences in Zambia (p. 10).*

*In Uganda Sr Mary Gorreth is making the world a healthier and greener place with her urban vegetable growing programme.*

*We were delighted to hear last month that Krisia Moya our person in charge in El Mozote, El Salvador was given a special prize (in our name) for her defence of Human Rights (p. 18).*

*Sr. Janet from Pield Heath sent us some reflections on her at-home, on-line retreat and then on the great work being carried out in the school. We were sorry that we could not print more photos as there were no permissions. In the world today we have to protect our vulnerable persons.*

*Sister Alexander gave us a brief but interesting history of the house in Glasgow where our three sisters seem to be getting known in spite of all the restrictions.*

*We have a lovely article about Sr Christine Hawkins in her early years in California and we finish with some great Christmas photos.*

*Thanks to all and a Happy and Blessed New Year.*

*Anne and Emma*

## Final Profession - Sister Lucy Mukuka

A vocation to a particular way of life is a special calling from God to serve him in a special way. My name is Sister Lucy Mukuka, I am the fifth born child in a Catholic family of eight Children “seven girls and one boy”. As young Lucy my life had been a life of prayer, reading, writing and working hard. My vocation journey to religious life started when one day I went to my home parish, St Peter’s Church, to study in the small Library which the parish Priest opened for the youth of the parish. While I was there, I came across a shelf with the heading “CALLED TO SERVE”. The moment I read these words I was deeply touched and my mind and heart wanted to know what these books were about. When I opened one of the books I was attracted to one with the name of our congregation “SISTERS OF THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY” From that day as I read about our Congregation, my heart burned with longing to meet the sisters.

I had little knowledge about them but now all I really wanted was to get to know them and what they looked like and all without knowing that it was truly the Hidden Treasure I was seeking. Through the support of Sister Angelo, when she was the Vocations promoter, I was inspired to become a Sister.

*“The Soul that seeks the Lord will truly find Hidden Treasures of the Rarest kind and this total giving shall discover the Taste of love divine....”*



After completing my Secondary School I attended a retreat for aspirants in Mbala but as I was still very young the Sisters advised me to go on for further studies. Then on completion I would be able to do the Come and See programme and I would be old enough to live as a Sacred Hearts Sister. I went back home and attended the Teaching Training College at Malcom Moffat College of Education where I was trained as a Primary School Teacher.

I then wrote again to the Sisters and I was called for the Come and See and then to Stay and Live in community. "To God be Glory." 2020 is a very special and unique year. I would like to thank the Almighty God for his love and all He has done for me this year, for giving me life, making it possible to make perpetual profession and completing my degree studies as a secondary Teacher at DMI St Eugene.

On 7th November I made Final Vows in Mbala at Saint Francis Xavier Parish. The Celebration of my Perpetual Profession of Vows was a unique service and was very special and really beautiful.



Sr. Lucy with her Mother and her Auntie.



Sr. Lucy Mukuka with her Auntie Sr. Clare Mutala, HandMaid Sister, from Sr. Lucy's Dad's family.



Some family members and friends of Sr. Lucy

# My Graduation Ceremony for Secondary Teaching Degree at DMI St. Eugene University

Just 20 days after my big celebration of Final Vows, another Celebration followed ... my Graduation Ceremony.

On 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020, I graduated with a Degree Certificate from St Eugene University. I studied the Secondary Teacher Under Degree programme for the past four years. The major was in Social Sciences in which the principal subjects were Religious and Civic Education. The programme for my studies was a distance virtual learning programme during which I carried on working in the primary school full time. It was not easy but with God all is possible.

Obtaining a Degree certificate is a great achievement for me in my life and I am very happy and proud of the Congregation and myself because my level of knowledge and understanding has increased and what I have acquired will contribute to the development of the Congregation and to the development of society.

Thank you very much to the Leadership Team for sending me for further studies and thank you very much Sisters for all the support during my studies.

*Sister Lucy*

*Right; with Sister Judith at the graduation.*

*Back page; flying colours!*



## Update from Zambia



Sisters Yvonne and Margaret leading Archbishop Banda, and the invited guests to the 3 Classroom block for the blessing and official

I would like to share something of what is going on in Zambia.

We had a beautiful day on the 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 when we saw Bauleni Special Needs Project, in Lusaka, have its 3 Classroom block and 2 Laboratories, being blessed and opened by Archbishop Dr. Alick Banda. The funding was thanks to Misesan Cara in Ireland.

The event was attended by many people from the Ministry of Education and other Government Officials and of course the students from the school. At this event we were able to share our concerns and challenges with the relevant authorities and we are hopeful that they will come in and support us in areas we want to improve further .

We are so grateful to Misesan Cara because their support has really transformed Bauleni Special Needs Project in many ways.



In front of the newly opened classroom block. Left to right; Sisters Sylvia Mulenga, Rosemary, Yvonne, Esther Suico and Margaret with Archbishop Banda after the ceremony.

In Mbala, the Households In Distress Programme wants to express their gratitude for a 2 classroom block for skills training for Young people with Special Needs at Victor Braun Special Needs School (formerly known as Victor Braun Home Based Education Centre) and the building of 2 staff houses at Chele Community School. This is a great achievement because both projects had very humble beginnings. Victor Braun Centre started its operations in round shelters (Insaka) and a metal container which was sent by Sr. Elizabeth Dawson some years ago. The European Union also has built a 3 classroom block at Victor Braun Centre. One classroom has been furnished with Physiotherapy equipment and accessories. The other two classrooms will be used for learning.



The Ministry of education has also seconded teachers to both Victor Braun Special School and Chele Community school.

The two houses at Chele Community School; Left to right; Sr. Muda, Sunday, a teacher at Chele, the bricklayer and contractor

The Rotary Club that meets at Chigwell and other doners have also contributed to the growth of Chele Community School.



Thank you all for your support in many different ways.

May the Lord bless you.

*Sr Yvonne*

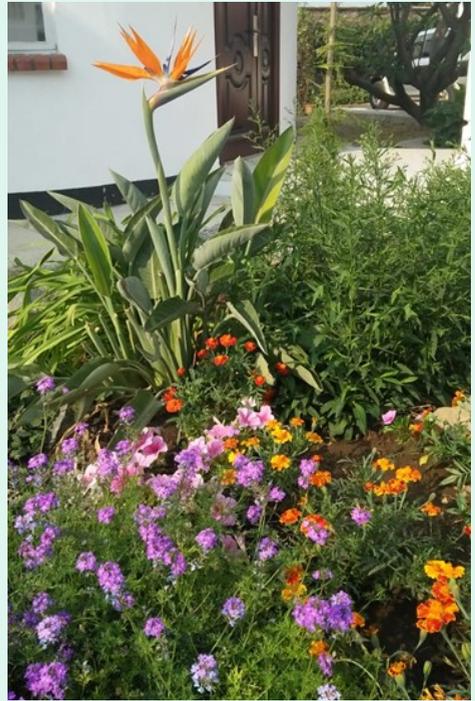


## Beautiful Blooms in Zambia

In the 2016 and 2017 rainy seasons our grounds here at Lake Road were flooded with dirty water, not a pleasant experience. TG inside the house was not affected. The water must have been very contaminated as it destroyed the garden. Since then we have had very poor flowers and even the grass was poor despite applying manure and garden fertilizer. We did not have enough rain last year to cause flooding in this area. This year the roads have been worked on and good drainage provided so flooding should not be a problem in the future.

Early last year we began making a compost pit and it has proven to be a great success for the garden. Six

months ago we opened the first pit and put the contents on the flower beds, the results are wonderful to see. The lilies which we have not seen



for three years have reemerged with beautiful large blooms among rich green leaves. Our Bird of Paradise plant has had many lovely large blooms. The sisters have enjoyed having such exquisite blooms for the prayer room. The smaller plants are a treat to see, rich yellow, pink, red, blue and purple blooms make a

delightful display of color. So good soil produces good fruits.

Our latest interest in the garden is the use of environmental friendly insecticides. A garlic and onion mixture is proving effective as a beginning.



Our beautiful Frangipani tree has in the past been infected, the leaves crinkle, turn black and fall off. We had been using insecticides from the farm shop which we know to be toxic to save the tree, but now the garlic and onion spray appears to be having a better effect. The leaves are a healthy green and the white blotches are gone from the bark. I am not sure if it will be effective in keeping the mosquito population down. Extra geraniums have been planted near the house as they are

reported to keep the mosquitos away. It has not been proven if the garlic and onion concoction is really an insecticide or if it is the pungent smell of the mixture that is responsible for its insecticidal results. The smell does not linger in the area once the spraying is done but it does leave a slight greasy coating on the leaves.

By using it I hope that our small area will be graced by more butterflies and bees etc. and increase the number of small birds in the garden. A garden, small though it may be, when producing beautiful flowers and is a habitat for God's smaller creatures is a real inspiration for the soul to praise God its creator. The early morning bird chorus is a delightful awakening sound each morning, a real gift from God.



*Sr Elizabeth Mooney*

Note from the editor: This mixture of garlic + has been used for many years now in El Salvador and is recognised as an effective repellent of insects who (like many of us) don't like the smell—Keep it up.

## My Zambia Experience

When I was asked to accompany the Novices in Cebu in 2014, I was humbled and was reluctant to accept the job because I felt I was not worthy and equipped to be a Novice Director.

The first and fundamental author of every formation is GOD, who acts in the heart of each person. I humbly said “YES” and again when I was invited to go to Zambia to do the same job from February 2019 to May 2020. There were many struggles and challenges but by the grace and mercy of God I survived and have learned a lot.



One memorable experience was when I traveled to Chilubi Island to visit the family of Novice Christabel Machisa in 2019. It was a 16 hour non-stop travel from Lusaka to Mbala, then an overnight trip to the Island. We had to cross a lake, which should take about

30-45 minutes but it took us about 3 hours because the boat-man was lost and it was dark - no signal/no power. The engine stopped many times. Sr. Esther Soko who accompanied us was praying the Holy Rosary and tried to remember nice Bible verses just to console herself in case anything bad happened.

My attention was focused on my ‘back-pack’ which was soaked with fuel which we were carrying from Kasama for the boat. I was also struggling and praying, trying to convince myself it was not yet our time to perish that night because I still had work to do in Zambia.

Thank God we reached the Island around 9am, tired , scared and hungry. The parish priest in Chilubi met us and arranged for us stay at the convent of the Sisters of the Child Jesus.

The visit to Christabel's family the next day went very well with the help of Sr. Esther Soko who knows the language.

Prior to the first Profession of Vows, we had an 8-day Retreat at Kasisi with Fr. Cliff Fumbelo which the Novices found very helpful. Before we left Kasisi we visited the grave of Sr. Cecilia Mulenga, the person who brought me to this Congregation. I am sure she is happy I came to Zambia (the country she was very proud of). She knew the novices, Cecilia. and Christabel.

Thanks be to God, the First Profession of Vows on 2nd February 2020 went very well with Fr. Charles Mwila as the main celebrant and Sr. Angelo Roncalli as representative of Sr. Mary Mangan.



I thought my job as Novice Director ended after the First Profession of the group but I was asked to receive and accompany the next group of Novices, which started straight away. I was exhausted by the end of March and I was informed by Sr. Mary Mangan that in May, Sr. Mulenga would take over and I would assist her until 1st September. It was a big relief for me. Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the inter-novitiate classes at Kalemba Hall were cancelled and I continued to give classes from the end of March to middle of May. Subjects covered: Genogram, Biblical Foundation of the Vows, and others.

If it wasn't for the COVID-19, I was due to go back to Cebu the first week of September to attend the Final Profession of Vows of Sr. Luella Danieles on 16 October. But I was unable to return then so I changed my travel dates.

## Conclusion:

Being in Zambia in Formation Ministry was and is a great JOY and blessing. Though I felt I was not competent enough or equipped to do the job. With God's grace, I tried to help and guide the Novices to know, love and serve God in love and humility, and to live a happy and healthy community life. I am convinced that once we have an intimate relationship with God, everything follows. I am so grateful to God, fulfilled and happy that my four groups of Novices: two in Cebu (Sisters Marissa, Shiela and Odette) and two in Zambia: (Sisters: Beatrice, Cecilia, Christabel and Mary Gorreth....and the present group: Sisters Comfort, Fancy, Felistus, Flaviour and Mary Lesa) are happy, have grown and hopefully are good community members.

With them, my love and devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus has deepened; my knowledge of our gentle, loving, humble founder Fr. Victor Braun has grown, and my commitment as a Sister of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary has strengthened and developed.

I was inspired by the article written by Sr. Cecilia Nachilima (KIT October 2020) on the 'Visitation of Fr. Victor Braun'. Yes, we have to move forward and adapt to the changes and needs of today, but we need to retain the spirit of our Founder and our early Sisters and be always connected to the Heart of Jesus so that we can really live as a vibrant community that can attract many vocations.

It is my wish that the next Chapter will bring many more blessings to the Congregation and much healing for all of us so we become truly *"Joyful Bearers of the Word in the Heart of the our Fragile and Wounded World."*

*Sr. Esther G. Suico*



# My Graduation - 27<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2020

I thank God Almighty for walking with me all through my Studies of Formation at Tangaza University College in Nairobi Kenya from 2018 to 2019. I thank the Leadership Team too for their continuous support and all the Sisters in the Congregation.

My graduation took place on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020. I graduated with a Diploma in Religious Formation and our graduation (as you can see in the photo on the right) was virtual.

I plan to use my Diploma now by integrating what I have studied in my daily living just as I have been doing.

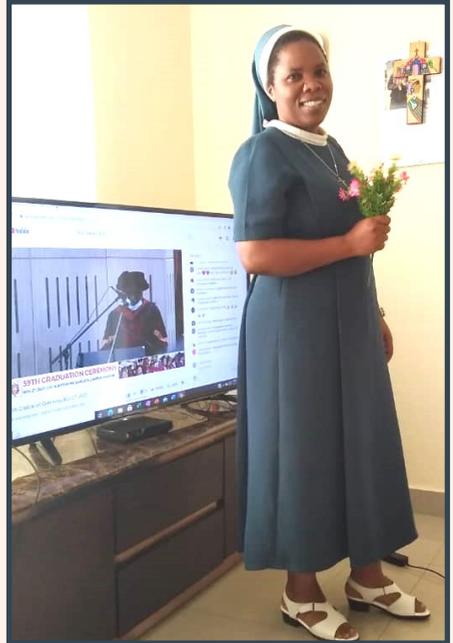
Example, as I continue with my Nurse-Midwifery work, I believe that my Psycho-Spiritual Counselling skills benefit every client that I come in to contact with everyday.

I will also continue applying my skills in my Vocation work. I am willing to share my knowledge and talents with anyone who wants or needs it and ALL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD ALMIGHTY.

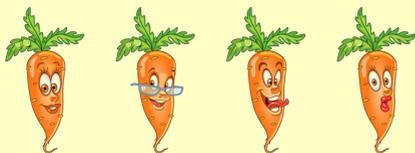
Thank you.

*Sister Trinitor*

*Rt; With sisters Natasha, Jacqueline and Elizabeth.*



## Agricultural training and the Goodness of Mother Earth



I completed a three month agriculture and crop training course at Mukono Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute earlier this year. It was an enriching experience, and I gained skills to pass on to other people, helped to produce food for our own needs and learnt more about how all of this is good for our Mother Earth.

One of the sections that I found very helpful was Urban Farming. This involves the growing of crops in and



around the city homes, using different technologies and practices in any space around the home or local community. Urban Farming calls for one to be creative and innovative in crop production.

We can use different kinds of disposable containers or materials to grow many different plants in small spaces around our homes and communities.

There are many methods used in urban farming. One is called, Cake gardening, where nets, sacks or strong polyurethane bags are joined together to form a cake of many levels. Another urban farming method is called a Hanging garden. These are gardens where one grows crops in different containers e.g. baskets, plastic bottles and buckets and place them on a raised place or use string to tie them to building walls.

Being able to put my learning into practice has been very valuable and I feel, to share these skills with others will be very helpful to many of our people and will help them earn a living

Give it a try, you may enjoy it.

*Sr. Mary Gorreth Nanziri*



## **IT'S NOT ABOUT ME, IT'S FOR THEM AND IT'S A JUST FIGHT**

*As part of the 72<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the office for the Defense of Human Rights in El Salvador, celebrated the International Day for The Defense of Human Rights with awards and recognition of people who have excelled as Human Rights defenders. The award is titled the "National Award for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights 2020".*

*As part of the SSHJM Accompanying Team of the victims and communities that were affected by the Massacre of El Mozote and surrounding villages, I received this award. It is an honourable mention dedicated to me, for the invaluable work of the protection, defense and promotion of human rights. Personally, I am very grateful that an institution such as the Office for the Defense of Human Rights has acknowledged the work carried out, especially in the Department of Morazán (very neglected area), also for the people who have been dignified through the struggles and accompaniment we have provided over many years.*

*We are all aware of the issues that Human Rights entail, and even now there is no law in the country that protects defenders of Human Rights . Despite all the achievements, we have also had many challenges. This is due to the fact that many powers within The State do not like the existence of people or institutions that watch over vulnerable and unprotected persons, and because our main role is to protect victims from all kinds of re-victimization. As is known in the case of the Massacre El Mozote, the challenges have endured over many years with justice, truth and reparation always being sought after. In El Salvador this truth and justice could not be found, we therefore had to go to The Inter-American Court of Human Rights in 2012. In spite of having a favourable verdict, we have had to support the victims in seeking full compliance of the sentence, from the Salvadoran State, and it still has not been fully carried out.*



***Krisia, being presented with the award by Apolonio Tobar - Ombudsman for The Defence of Human Rights in El Salvador***

*Today many of us who carry on this cause by giving statements or supporting processes, such as the demand to open the military archives to identify the true perpetrators of the crime, have been insulted on social media, which goes so far as to say that many of us and the victims simply fight for money, and above all discredit our work by calling us politically partisan. This is something that we, as a team, have had to defend together with other Human Rights institutions and to work in a way that is totally independent of any ideology except that of basic human rights. For me it has been a learning process to accompany victims for whom the truth of such atrocities, carried out 39 years ago, is an ongoing hurt . My work with the victims that we have accompanied for many years is a fundamental commitment to making situations of social injustice visible, combating impunity and boosting everything that is aimed at dignifying the victims, Above all the most important role has been to empower family members, to include victims on the Official Register of Victims and to accompany these people and communities in claiming their basic rights.*

*It is a privilege for me that with the Congregation of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and the support of Misesan Cara we can say that we have advanced greatly and that the work done has been visible.*

**EL MOZOTE NEVER AGAIN!!!!!!**

*Krisia Mariela Moya (El Mozote project coordinator, El Salvador)*



# Finding God on our Journey

*(Reflections by Sister Janet Finnegan)*

Pope Francis

*To be focused beyond myself*

*To be focused on the Mission of Jesus*

*Have a Heart*

*Listen to others*

*Prayerful discernment before making discissions*

*also involving others.*

*There is a variety of gifts, St. Paul*

*Spirit of the Living God*

*Fall afresh on us*

*Making good use of the facilities on our doorstep!*

Some time ago as I walked around the grounds in Pield Heath, the bicycle track, and playing fields, I sat in the 'Den' to reflect. I got an inspiration that I would make a private retreat. But most retreat centres were closed due to COVID-19. Surprise, surprise! I then found out that there was a directed retreat on 'YouTube' from Knock Shrine. As the daily novena had to be cancelled due to the pandemic, the Spiritual Team there were now working on-line.

The timing was ideal as the Pield Heath pupils were on holiday, so I had full use of the facilities here including the oratory. The traffic was minimal, no planes flying overhead, vivid blue skies, a gentle breeze from the trees, birds singing, it was heavenly. My retreat was very special. In case anyone is interested, I enclose a link to 'Find God in the Mess'

[https://www.youtube.com/resultssearch\\_query=Jesuit+Week+in+Knock%3A+Finding+God+in+the+Mess+of+the+Pandemic](https://www.youtube.com/resultssearch_query=Jesuit+Week+in+Knock%3A+Finding+God+in+the+Mess+of+the+Pandemic)

To have Mass on-line from St Peter & Paul's Church, Portlaoise was a real treat. I was greatly impressed not only by the way the Mass was celebrated, with care and dignity, but also by the homilies, music and song which were prayerful and uplifting each day, depending on the scripture readings of the day. It was a grace-filled time.

## Up-to-date facilities on our doorstep

The Pield Heath Student Gardeners worked extremely hard in the garden throughout last year. The gardeners enjoyed showing the judges for *Hillingdon in Bloom* around their garden and explaining what they had been busy doing. How they had grown all the vegetables and built the 'Den' within the



trees, which is now a beautiful space to sit and reflect.

They were all rewarded in August when the competition results were announced, and they walked away with the Gold for the category of 'Best school display'.



Their hard work has continued this year and, in the summer, the polytunnel and allotment were full of delicious fresh vegetables, all grown from seed. The cookery classes enjoyed coming out into the garden and picking their ingredients from their very own garden.



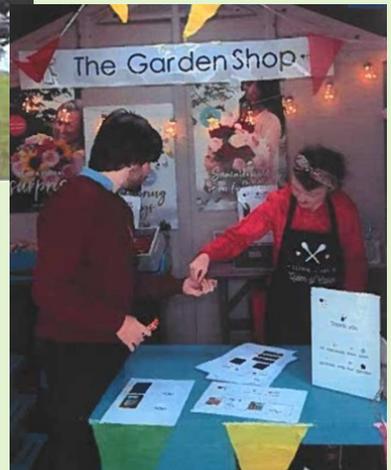
Great team-work was shown in the Horticulture Department, when the students enjoyed working together to create beautiful designed decorations to sell at the Christmas Fayre. With the help of staff and parents their stall made £600.

This was followed in December when the Student Gardeners worked very hard towards the RHS Green Plan It competition. Ten weeks of hard work and fantastic teamwork paid off when on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December, at the awards ceremony held at Wisley, they were awarded the "Pupil's Choice" Award for our Eco-garden / Pizza plant model!!!



So well done to Phoebe, Fahad, Clarke, Toby, Jamie and Ryan and to all of the other students that have helped in the project.

The development of the garden continues when a previously unloved, spider-covered shed was lovingly redecorated to create a warm and welcoming student run shop.



Then in Autumn this year the students were kept very busy preparing for the opening of 'The Well' the Community café. On the opening day they hosted a Macmillan Coffee morning and raised an amazing £550 for charity.



This was followed in October by the World Food Day. The day started with a short video in assembly letting all the classes know the meaning of the day. There was a special International menu. The students served Italian themed paninis, French pastries and American hotdogs. An amazing £40 was raised for charity.



A massive well done to all the Pield Heath Student Gardeners.

The community in Pield Heath have a deep gratitude for all the staff, how the most vulnerable pupils and parents are treated with such great love, dignity, respect and compassion, showing total dedication and commitment. Also, for staff relatives and school governors and for all those who walk through the gates.

What a great example and witness for our community here to experience it.... I have called you by name, not by he, she or x.

As Pope Francis mentioned 'it is the time of moving forward in Hope and Love, letting go of old systems, which we now realise were not life giving, uplifting, encouraging and empowering called 'the good old days'.

Now it is the time for us to create our new 'normal', things we have taken for granted and have always done!

There is a variety of gifts within the congregation, now is the time for us to acknowledge these at different levels, 'Have a Heart', take a risk, listen to each other, encourage and empower, uplift with love and compassion.

From Richard Rohr: *Only together can we participate in the unity of the Spirit as we learn to relate to each other out of compassion and love. When action and contemplation are united, our lives and actions begin to heal our suffering world by their very presence.* We are companions on a journey.

I wonder how many of our sisters fully know about Pield Heath School/Convent. Come and see for yourselves, you will be made very welcome. Last year I invited Srs Esther, Teddy and Lucky to spend a day with me at the Homeless Centre, Acton. I know the sisters in Marian House when free to use the beautiful grounds are full of gratitude too.

*Sister Janet Finnegan*



## A background history to our house at Levernside Crescent, Glasgow

On the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2020, Feast of the Epiphany, Sister Marie Chambers, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, rang me to ask if the sisters would be interested in looking at their house, two flats made into one, as they were moving away from the area. As we were looking for a place in Drumchapel we thought the phone call could be an answer to our prayers. Sister Clara being away, Sister Edith and I talked the idea over and decided that I would speak with our Councillor, Sister Eileen McLoughlin. Meantime arrangements were made with the Franciscan Sisters to visit and find out the needs of the local area and the suitability of the house.



Once we heard from the Generalate team we rang the sisters and told them that we were interested in moving whenever it was convenient to them. A date was set by the Franciscan Sisters to move in April. However, the sisters left sooner than expected a day before the Lock Down March 16<sup>th</sup>. For us it was a blessing as we were able to get a painter into the house. Sr Edith's brother laid the laminate as well as seeing to many other important jobs around the house. When carpets were laid, we were free to get ready to move once the furniture removals people completed their work.

The house was ready for us to move in on the 29<sup>th</sup> June. We were grateful to have all the hard work complete before moving. We are the fourth religious congregation to live here. The first group of sisters were the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart. Sister Anne Petit wrote:

"We went to Glasgow in August 1987. The tenements on Brockburn Road (not far from here) were being pulled down so the Council moved us to

Levernside Crescent in 1998/99. The flats had been adapted for a large family, so it was offered to us. We were registered with the Archdiocese and paid the rent to the City Council. Before going to St James' parish, we were involved with the Archdiocese Renew Programme which was just starting. Mgr. M Coakley, divided the parish into four areas, giving us each an area. As well as visiting the families, one of us was involved in the Sacramental programme in St Monica's school, another sister did the baptism preparation. We visited the local hospital and Lourdes Secondary school, as well as being part of the inter faith group".

Our Lady of the Missions were the second group of sisters. It appears they did not stay too long in the area. Some of the parishioners still remember the "first group of sisters".

The Franciscans Missionaries of Mary arrived in 2002. One of the sisters worked as a doctor in the local hospital. One was involved in SPRED, one visits Care Homes, and one was a Street Pastor in the City of Glasgow.

Because of COVID-19 19 we are unable to be involved in any ministry. Two of us have a "phone ministry" one requested by Alzheimer Scotland and one from our previous parish. Sister Clara is in her 2<sup>nd</sup> year in Spiritual Direction through Zoom. We are gradually getting to know some of the parishioners. We have a choice of 3 churches near that we can attend during the week. The first parishioner I met at St James told me he had worked in our prayer room when the first sisters arrived in the parish. Another lady I met from City Council told me she introduced the first Sisters to the house, so the "first Sisters are nor forgotten".

We thank God for what has been achieved by our predecessors and look forward in Hope to the future.

*"When we are dreaming alone it is only a dream.  
When we are dreaming with others it is the beginning  
Of reality"*

*Dom Helder Camara*

Sister Alexander McLean

# Sister Christine 99 years young



Sister Christine Hawkins, while she was named Sister Mary Paschal, was missioned in the 1950's to St. Anthony's Atwater. For those of you who do not know, Christine had a very special style. She was rarely seen without a smile. Behind that smile there was a little bit of impishness underneath the very diligent Sister who was attentive to what was needed for the day and planning, oh yes, always planning, for what was next. In this sense

Christine always had someone lined up who could assist her in whatever was the newest project in her mind, for it would not remain in her mind for long. She had an uncanny way of getting others involved. The men here in St. Jerome's El Cerrito love to remind me of that.

I always admired Christine's ability to let any negative happening of the day pass over her like water off a duck's back.' Christine never allowed herself to ruminate nor stew about anything, nor did she hold grudges. This made for a very pleasant, harmonious environment and how I wished I had learned from her. There was always a lightness and almost cloud 9 quality about Christine and the most serious issues I ever heard her deal with were those that were of God. Family faith formation, preparing children for the sacraments, preparing for her classes both in the elementary schools and in Mora High School, Watsonville, were when she got serious. All had to be done well.

When I was a novice and Sr. Anne, our novice directress, was away at meetings or retreat, Christine would join us in the novitiate room. She would bring her school kids work to do 'corrections' which we would go through and lickety split her work would get done, none of us even really taking in that our recreation had been used for work for Christine made it fun. She had that ability to get others to help her in such a pleasant way one would even think she was doing you a favour by giving you work to do. After corrections were done we then would learn a bit of French. I learned to tell time, some French greetings and to sing the Marseillaise , Une Flambeau Jeanette Isabelle and Avec Mes Sabot. Oh

yes, Christine, was special, full of life and fun and thank God she is still that joyful person, always looking forward to what God has to offer next.

Now, here is a very short story of an actual incident that has often been told and retold of her round the tables of Sacramento, Oakland, El Cerrito, and ... further back ... Atwater, Livingston, Turlock, and Watsonville also.

So let's set the scene. It is September. The year is 1956 or thereabouts. Sister Mary Paschal (Christine) had arrived from Chigwell to teach in Sacred Heart School in Turlock in 1954, one year after the first group from Chigwell had come to Atwater. After another group had arrived, and in order for the new schools to have a mix of Sisters who knew the ropes to help the new arrivals to the USA, Sisters were moved around. By 1955 we had three schools here, St Anthony's, Atwater, Sacred Heart, Turlock, and St. Jerome's El Cerrito. All within two years of first arrival. By 1956 there were about fifteen Sisters here. And Sister Christine was moved from Turlock to Atwater where she was to remain quite a number of years.

So, as I said, it is September 1956. Remember, the Sisters are wearing their full habits of long white lined black veils, white guimpes and bandeaus, long dresses covered with scapulars and sleeves that hid a treasure trove. On this particular day, Sister Christine (teaching first grade comprising the six year olds) sends one of her pupils on a message to Sister Anne of Jesus (later Sister Anne Savage) who was teaching second grade, the 7 year olds. Now you know small children need to memorize a message. So Christine instructed the child to go next door, knock on the door, go in to Sister Anne and say: "Sister Anne of bow your head Jesus, Sister Mary Paschal"..... Anne's response .... "stop that!" What does she want. Go on with the message". Oh but the little one could not do that as well Sister Mary Paschal knew. So after another couple of attempts Anne cooled her heels and let the child continue ... "Sister Anne of bow your head Jesus Sister Mary Paschal needs an eraser for the blackboard". And so the deed was done, the message given, and off the child went back to Mary Paschal happily with the message of a blackboard eraser Sister Mary Paschal did not need at all.

This was all in a spirit of fun and was typical of Christine for the imp in her was ever thinking something up that would give a smile to others. Oh yes! Who do you think first told us this story? "Sister Anne of bow your head Jesus" who got great delight out of telling it and enjoying our laughter.

Yes, you can all verify that over the years the Sisters we remember with fondness

are those who had a way of initiating fun. They are the ones we tell the stories about. There was Sister Mary 'Only' who (as a postulant) kept her return train ticket in the heel of her shoe and she was also the one who dipped a chicken leg in the holy water on the way into Chigwell chapel causing Sr. Anne to shriek. Poor Anne. She could have practical jokes played on her because she was just a little bit too perfect, but in her goodness she received the jokes in the spirit with which they were done.

So, it is Christmas week. It is Christine's birthday! Yes, from today onwards she is into her 100th year which will be completed on her 100th birthday next December 22nd. She was born on the bravest day of the year. It is the day of the first glimmer of new light, the day that follows the shortest day of the year and marks the onward journey towards the light of Christmas, the New Year and Spring.

May our dear Sister Christine feel truly blessed and loved on this 99th birthday. May she know the joy she brought to us because of her fun loving spirit that never took herself nor her Sisters too seriously. HAPPY BIRTHDAY, CHRISTINE.



I lived with her in Watsonville 1965 - 1969 and Sacramento 1976 - 1981

Written with love from Sister Kathleen Lavery

# Christmas photos



Sister Kathleen in California wearing her new cardigan. She is full of Christmas cheer and sending love over the continents

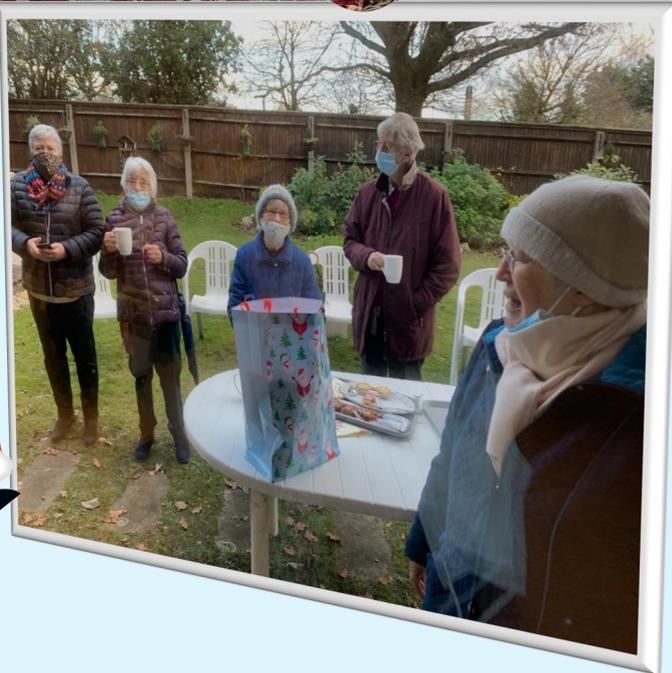


The sisters in Marian house are still in isolation but that didn't stop their neighbours from Field Heath donning warm wraps and sharing the joy of the Season. Now that's Sisterly love!





From the warmth of Zambia to the cold of England and from those locked down to those locked out the message continues and love and greetings flow. I hope our younger sisters will take example from their elders—never lose the joy of Christmas. Always make a special effort to bring your love to those who most need it and you will often find that it is those who are nearest to you who need it most. The gift is not the presents (although they are great to get). We all know what the greatest gift is and that we are to share, share and share again, there is always more to give.





In Chingola Rudolf the Red-nose reindeer is looking a bit confused as it looks like there are three Santas ready to go off and deliver presents; Santa Elizabeth, Santa Trinitor and Santa Natasha. It's down to Sr Jaqueline to sort them out Good luck !



Over the page we see that the party in Chigwell is in full swing but we had to behave ourselves as we were being looked over by both Fr V. Braun and St. Francis de Sales. Sr. Mary Ita was very good. She stayed by the Crib but Amanda set a good light to the Christmas pudding—delicious.





After the Three Wise Men left, the Three Wiser Women arrived.

## SISTER'S JUBILEES 2021

60 Years - Diamond Jubilee 2<sup>nd</sup> February

Sister Ellen Burke

Sister Angela Burke

60 Years - Diamond Jubilee 28<sup>th</sup> August

Sister Pius Galligan



70 Years - Platinum Jubilee 2<sup>nd</sup> February

Sisters Gabriel of Dolours

Sister Dorothea Malloni

70 Years - Platinum Jubilee 28<sup>th</sup> August

Sister Pauline McCullagh



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