

Keeping in Touch

SSHJM

June 2022

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A Word from the Editor

On the Feasts of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary we call ourselves to renew our commitment, and this year is even more special as two of our younger members, Sisters Mary and Flavioir are making their First Commitment of vows. Six young women were also received as novices and another six as candidates. What a joy it is for us that people still recognise the Congregation as an example of God's love in the world and an example to be followed. Three of the novices have included a little of their own spirituality in their personal reflections on page 32. We also recognise that our works once established continue and thrive, like Harmony House in Dagenham and the several groups of SHCs that meet regularly to celebrate life and to pray for us. The Sisters in Cebu and in Zambia sent us wonderful reports of new developments while at the same time in Cork we celebrated the lives of Sisters Eileen Hennebry and Catherine Murphy who both went to the Lord recently.

More celebrations are approaching soon when Sisters Edith Woods and Elizabeth Mooney will have their Golden Jubilee celebrations here in Chigwell on the 28th of August. Sister Elizabeth Francis also will celebrate her Diamond Jubilee and Sister Maria Goretti her Platinum on the same date. I just give you this timely warning so that you can send your congratulations to the sisters in plenty of time.

I would like to remind you all, please, to send me some photos for next years calendar—its up to you how good it is—I only put it together.

With love and prayers

Anne

Feast of the Sacred Heart, Zambia

Congratulations to Sisters Mary
and Sister Flaviour on making their
First Commitment of vows in Lusaka.



Sister Mary signing the Register



Sister Flaviour — “I vow and promise to God”



Sister Julie Rose, Father Charles Mwila, Sister Flaviour Chomba, Sister Mary Lesa, Father Paul Namono, Father Piet V, Sister Mulenga Bwalya, and Father Dawit.



Above; sister Elizabeth M. enjoying the celebrations.
 Left: Sister Julie looks a little out-flanked here but the day does surely belong to Sisters Mary and Flaviour.



Sisters Mulenga (Novice Directress), Sister Yvonne , Sister Flaviour, Sister Trinitor and Sister Mary.

What a great group of sisters we have in Zambia.

Congratulations go also to our six new novices; Sister Paula Julaika Naziwa, Sister Agness Zulu, Sister Monica Nayame, Sister Precious Sakala, Sister Ritah Tuhirriwe, and Sister Mary Florence Nakajiira. We will surely get to know them all soon as we meet through KIT and our Zoom meetings.



Candidates Lt to Rt: Jacqueline Mwandwe, Catherine Mwanza, Santrina Ayebare, Mwenda Chilekwa, Rebecca Kwamboka Nyakundi, and Evelyn Baatyó



Above: Novices and Candidates ready to sing a joyful song to the Lord.



Left: Sister Mary D. and Sister Rosemary Kasembe happy to be reunited.

Below: I really can't start to name everyone as I know I would make at least one mistake! What we can say is that there is great new life in Zambia and Uganda (plus a little one from Cebu).



The blitz destruction of the church of Our Lady Immaculate, The Convent and St. Pelagia's Home, 654 Rotherhithe Street, London SE 16

Part Two

We concluded the last instalment of the article written by Mother Adelaide with the death of many firefighters.



We walked some distance when a policeman stopped a bus going in the opposite direction, and asked the conductor to take us further. The bus was turned for us , but he took us only to the nearest stop where we could get a transfer for Lewisham (where we had a convent). As we stood there many friends came forward to sympathise with us, but suddenly the 'Alert' sounded and we had to run for safety to a public shelter.

It was now 8.45 p.m. and the raid continued until 5 a.m. We were only in this shelter when bombs dropped continuously, starting fires all around the shelter, but, thank God, these fires were brought under control very quickly. All through the night, the Rosary, short ejaculations and hymns were offered up. Soon after midnight our Chaplain found his way to the shelter. How very pleased we were to see him again. Immediately we all knelt down and he gave us a General Absolution. He said that when he had deposited the Blessed Sacrament safely at the parish church, he told the Parish Priest what was happening and then returned immediately to the stricken area. He has obtained permission from the police to evacuate two thousand people. This seemed an almost impossible task , but with the help of the wardens, ambulance drivers and volunteers, he succeeded, thank God. Whilst assisting in the rescue work and looking for Catholics, he

could see the flames consuming the convent and the adjoining buildings. In one area there were one hundred Catholics to whom he could not make his way. He was glad to hear that they were able to get away later on. In describing the complete destruction of the convent, Father Cole said, "I have never been so near to a fire of such dimensions. The flames were terrific". The danger was accentuated through the fact that the area is an island, with bridges leading to it. Father Cole was often near to direct hits, and at times thought it was the end for him. Thank God he received only a light injury to his knee when diving for cover from a bomb which exploded near to him. When he had cleared the area, he had to go to the hospital and there anoint many wounded, dead and dying. The wounded firemen were unable to undress, so Father Cole assisted the nurses in this work. He was then called to the mortuary where many raid victims had just been brought in from an elementary school which had a direct hit. In this school there were two hundred evacuees who had escaped the fire danger only to meet death in this way. The sight here was so appalling that not even ambulance men who brought in the victims would go in. Yet Father Cole went in and gave general Absolution and anointed any he recognised as being Catholics. He left us in the midst of the raid to return to the hospital. Before he left we asked him to come back early in the morning to offer Holy Mass for us, as it was Sunday morning, and we were in no state to appear in a public church. He returned at 6 a.m. and took us to St Anne's convent which was only a short distance from us. I should mention here that there were two ladies with us Mrs Courtney Snr. And Mrs Courtney Jnr. Who were exceedingly kind to us and who went to great trouble and inconvenience to make tea for us. This was no easy matter, since there was a great number to find milk and sugar for, whilst bombs were raining down all the time, yet they managed. We were very grateful for this. They did everything in their power to make us forget our unhappy plight and sad experiences. To our great regret, these two kind friends were killed some

weeks later in an air-raid. May God grant them eternal rest. On the Monday after the fire Sister Mechtilde and I met these two ladies near their home. They insisted on giving us a large parcel of clothes for the girls and ten shillings, and offered to help us in any way they possibly could: I shall always remember their great kindness to us.

To return to Sunday morning—when we reached St. Anne's convent, Mother Vincent and the sisters received us most kindly and brought us into their little Oratory for Mass. When Father Cole had vested he offered Mass in thanksgiving to God for our and his safety and whilst he did he wept and so did we. It was only then that we realised to the full how the Masses and prayers already offered had saved us. I shall never forget that Mass and receiving Our Lord once again. After Mass the Sisters had breakfast prepared for us. Then we set out for Lewisham. We had to take a circuitous route, owing to the intensive damage done to the direct bus and tram routes. However, we reached St. Teresa's, Lewisham, about 11.30 a.m. and Mother Hilda and the Sisters gave us a real warm welcome. A refreshing wash renewed our energy and then we had lunch. I sent two Sisters to Chigwell to acquaint Rev. Mother General of what had happened. She was terribly grieved and most sympathetic. She very kindly gave the Sisters a change of clothing for us and arranged for the transfer of the Sisters to different Houses. When I received RMG's instructions, I sent Sister Mary of the Angels to Homerton that afternoon, sending Sister Ernestine to accompany her.



All day there were inquiries as to our safety. That afternoon Dr. O'Boyle brought some of us, in her car, back to see the damage done to the convent. The destruction of the whole district was beyond description. We had to plod on foot for half-a-mile to the convent. The roads and pavements were so damaged that it was with great difficulty that we were able to make our way into the convent. It was hardly recognisable, The steel frames of the windows were lying twisted in the street. Two rooms at the front were intact but badly smoked, the workroom was untouched but badly smoked and the sewing machines and uncovered needlework were preserved but soiled. This we brought back to St. Teresa's to finish. The destruction of the Chapel, the remaining portion of the convent, the girl's wing, the laundry and the motor-van was complete.

Imagine 47 years of hard work by our sisters in that convent, myself having given 33 years here. We were only enjoying two years in the comfort of the new convent. Now all was gone—in a few hours.

I did not grieve for myself but for the older and delicate sisters who looked upon the convent as their home for the rest of their days here, and for the poor girls, many of them beyond their work and so few would understand or want the trouble of them.



Above: In Lewisham, nurses, many of them Irish, sort through the rubble of a damaged hospital after being bombed during the raids on London.

All of them were deeply grieved but, Thank God, they were quite calm and without the least murmur. As I left the convent, in my heart I breathed the words, “Fiat vountas tua”, and “The Lord has given, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the lord”.

On Monday 9th, I sent Sister Gonzaga back to Chigwell, she had been with us only a week .*

Sister Mechtilde and I went to the bank and then to the post office to leave instructions that the telephone should be disconnected, and also about Post Office savings Books (of three of the girls) that were destroyed in the fire. From there we went to St. Anne’s



Sr. Gonzaga in later years

convent to meet Fr. Cole. He had gone to the Archbishops house to tell His Grace about the destruction of the Church and Convent. Fr. Cole’s own house had been completely gutted and he was left, like ourselves, without anything. In this state he presented himself to the Archbishop, asking His Grace for permission to join the Franciscans. He told all his experiences to the Archbishop, who was deeply moved and sympathetic. He told Fr. Cole to go away for a holiday. He gave Fr. Cole many kind messages for us and said he would write to us. This is what he wrote to us the next day:

My Dear Mother Adelaide,

Father Cole told me yesterday about all you have gone through. I heartily condole with you, your sisters and your children. It has been a terrible ordeal for you all. Thank God that, though you lost your property, you escaped safely. You yourself had a very narrow escape. God has indeed blessed you in the midst of all your sorrow and anxiety. I was delighted to be able to send you the £100. You deserve every help.

God bless you all.

Yours sincerely

Peter, Archbishop, Bishop of Southwark,

When we left St. Anne's convent on Monday afternoon we went to our baker who was a catholic. I was anxious to settle all accounts as soon as possible. We saw Mrs. Weber, she was most kind and sympathetic and refused to accept any payment. She also said that if we required anything, we should let her know, and she would only be too delighted to help us. Later on she sent a large parcel of clothing for the girls. Taking leave of Mrs. Weber, we were on our way to the butcher when the "Alert" sounded. We had to retrace our steps and make haste to a shelter. It happened e to be the same shelter we were in on Saturday the 7th. After a short time we were able to leave the shelter as the planes seemed to be away in the distance. We hailed a passing car and asked the gentleman if he would take us to Lewisham. He very kindly consented. Just as we were nearing Lewisham the planes' came directly overhead. The gentleman said we must take shelter. Here we found ourselves in a dug-out, where we had to remain for about half-an-hour. The "All-clear" having gone, we got out and the car took us safely to the convent. Thank God we were saved again. When we arrived the "Alert" sounded again and the raid lasted all night. That night Dr. Carey was killed instantly with a direct hit when on a sick call, may he rest in peace.

To be continued. The next issues of KIT will have further instalments.

** ([editors note: Sr. Gonzaga only made her First Profession of vows on the 28th of August previous](#)).*





Sr Sheila – a Tribute



On Monday 2nd May 2022 we gathered in 70 Eldon Street to bid farewell to Sr Sheila who for 31 years had served in the parish of St Andrew's Greenock.

It was a sad day. Sr Sheila, together with Sr Patricia, was part of our extended community of Glasgow. We met frequently to celebrate events and sometimes just to be together.

We were as sad to see her go as she was to leave the place and the country she had come to call home.

In 1991 at the request of Bp John Mone for a parish Sister in his diocese, Sr John Vincent happily responded by missioning Sr Sheila to the parish of St Andrew's Greenock. Sheila dutifully arrived in Scotland towards the end of 1991 and began her work in January 1992.

In the late 70's and into the 80's Sr Sheila had worked in St Winefride's hospital as ward sister and in administration. In the early 70's she worked in Cork Bessboro as a midwife and also with adoptions, so this move to parish work was a huge learning curve, but Sheila captured many hearts with her warm and engaging personality.

Initially, she lived in Barrhead and commuted daily to Greenock before the Little Sisters of the poor offered her rooms for her use during the week which she gladly accepted.

When the house in Holy Family parish became empty a community was formed there.

Some of the sisters who came to live and minister in that parish included Sr Catherine Burns, Sr Paul Mary and Sr Maria Goretti. An Associate, Bridget joined the community too for some months. The opening of this community brought Sr Sheila closer to her area of work.

In 2006 the house in Eldon Street became available and Sr Maria Goretti joined Sr Sheila to form community and so there Sheila remained until 2022 – a total of 16 years resident in Greenock and 31 years in the parish of St Andrew.

During this time Sr Maria moved away and Sheila's sister Kathleen fresh from El Salvador joined her in community. Sr Kathleen continued to serve in St Ninians's, Gourock.

A number of priests passed through St Andrew's during Sr Sheila's time there and she simply adapted to their different ways of working while forming strong bonds of support and friendship for which she is remembered with gratitude.

So, while we mourn our decreasing numbers here in Scotland, we give thanks for the love and friendship that we enjoyed with Sr Sheila and wish her every joy and happiness in her retirement.



HARMONY HOUSE DAGENHAM

The story began when a refugee from Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), knocked on the door of the convent in Dagenham, asking if anyone could teach him English. Sister Rosemary Clerkin responded that she could, and before long a few more refugees came along for lessons. I (Sister Pierina), was sent from Harlow to help Sister Rosemary as the demand increased. We were able to use classrooms in our former secondary school, St. Teresa's, as the girls had moved to join the boys school, All Saints, on another site in Dagenham.

We soon realised that it was mainly men coming along since their wives had to look after the children. We then started a crèche so that the women also could attend lessons knowing that their children were being safely cared for. I did enjoy teaching keen adults as distinct from unruly children. I happily stood in front of the class sometimes with a piece of chalk in one hand and holding a baby who was too young for the creche on the other arm.

After a few years we needed to extend as a part of the building had been destroyed by fire and wasn't safe. The new building was impressive with classical columns surmounted by reclining bulls along the outside. There was a Sacred Space too. Sister Margaret Gallaher (now in Cork) was the Director at that time and invited the then Prime Ministers' wife, Cherie Blair for the grand opening.

We also wanted to give some of our own local people some skills training so organised courses in woodworking, cookery and hairdressing for example, although these changed as the need arose. Some of the ladies studied Child Care and a few came on to the staff. Jeanette was one of these and has been with us since the beginning as has Nico who became our caretaker. We spent a happy evening recently applauding Jean Millar who was retiring and Jeanette and Nico for their lengthy service.

Harmony House was aptly named by Sister Rosemary for it's welcoming mixture of people who attended. The creche also continues to flourish as the local people started sending their children early on.

Long may this great service continue.



Above: Director Marie Kearns, presents Jeanette with recognition of long service.



Above:

Jean's retirement cake—she needed hubby Martin to help to cut it. To tell the truth, it was a frozen ice cream cake!

Left:

Nico (centre) with Sisters Siobhan, Catherine, Pierina, Janet and Angelo



A PATH TO RECOVERY in CEBU:

A narrative of patients' progress and determination

By: Valerie C. Valencia, PTRP



Kindness and compassion: two words that help us to see beyond ourselves and feel for the pain and suffering of others. Being a physical therapist has allowed me to widen my perspective and understanding of people's situations. Each person has a different story to tell. Each patient has a unique experience. I, as a PT, am merely an instrument in helping patients regain their lost functionality.

During my first week working at The Sisters of The Sacred Hearts of

Jesus and Mary Rehab and Wellness Center, I was asked by one of the sisters to visit and assess a person who had suffered a stroke at their humble abode. I was accompanied by two caregivers and we were guided by a Sister. The patient, Tatay Jesus, was living on the second floor of their house. On assessment, I observed that Tatay Jesus could neither independently transfer from bed to chair, nor use his limbs fully, thus limiting his ability to stand, walk, and in general move. I showed him and the caregivers a series of exercises that had to be performed in order to attain progress and reach the goal of independence. The caregivers were enthusiastically helping the patient as I finished demonstrating and



instructing them on what to do and on how to perform the exercises properly. However, the treatment was cut short due to a diagnosis of a brain tumor and the lack of the necessary requirements for patient therapy. A week or two had passed when to my surprise Tatay Jesus arrived at the rehab center with all the requirements in hand. He was already walking and capable of lifting weights. He told me that he regularly

performed all the exercises that I had given him. His perseverance and determination to regain function and independence had been a huge factor in his recovery. He regularly went to the rehab center and continued his treatment with a new goal of being able to serve in the parish as soon as he improves and gains mobility. Today Tatay Jesus is back mingling in the community with greater endurance, strength, and mobility.

Nanay Filomena Casilan; Work at The Sisters of The Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Rehab and Wellness Center has always been busy. There are a lot of patients in need of therapy and care. I had witnessed with my own eyes how the Sisters' advocacy to reach out to every person in need was realized in the case of Nanay Filomena and Tatay Rodulfo Casilan. Tatay Rodulfo (or Tatay Rody) has been a patient of the rehab center for years due to stroke, but we had heard news that his wife, Nanay Filomena (Fe) had also suffered a stroke. We were alarmed especially as Tatay Rody was now frequently absent for therapy. The Sisters decided to visit Tatay Rody at Labangon and see his current situation. I was brought along with two other caregivers. Their house was a makeshift shelter, because they had no means to repair it and it had been damaged by a fire incident in their area. Upon assessment, their living conditions were nowhere near safe for their condition. The room was humid and hot. There was no proper ventilation. The house showed visible signs of neglect. Spoiled food was still on the table. Mosquitoes and flies were flocking around the room. A rooster was living inside the house. Its waste was in close proximity to their dishes and food. Nanay Fe and Tatay Rody were lying on a bed with sacks of cement

under their heads. I had approached Nanay Fe and tried to ask her questions about her condition. She had obviously been devastated by her current situation. She used to be the one caring for her husband, but due to her condition, she was no longer able to stand, walk, and go about her daily routine. At first she was very apprehensive to exercise. She felt like every move I made to her limbs had a corresponding pain involved. She refused to straighten her knees and perform some of the exercises I taught her. I had tried my best to give her words of encouragement and assurance that everything would be better, but it would take time and



effort to achieve this. We had to go back to Labangon on three consecutive days just to check on their well-being. On the third day, the couple had been transferred to a temporary shelter near the rehab center. Nanay Fe was bathed and cared for by the caregivers. I treated her everyday at the rehab center. We set a short term goal that Nanay Fe would be able to stand by herself. The ability to walk again was set as our long term goal. As of this day, Nanay Fe is now able to kick, slide, stomp,

and stand again. She has recently been more enthusiastic and cooperative during exercise. Her demeanor and muscle strength have all had notable improvements as she had moved to the temporary shelter. She is now more determined to exercise and finish her therapy everyday in the hopes of returning to her house in Labangon able to stand and walk again.



Two very different people with different experiences, each one has shown determination and perseverance. Progress is something we have to aim for no matter how little it may be. The advocacy of the Sisters to help these people in need of guidance and therapy is bigger than all of us at the rehab center combined. It may be a hard task to uphold, but the fulfillment of the advocacy is already in itself a reward.

This is what giving a helping hand at the Sisters of The Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Rehab and Wellness Center is all about.

A Stroke Success Story

by: Lino Gumboc, PTRP

A story of hard work and dedication at SSHJM Rehabilitation and Wellness Center. Cerebrovascular accident, more often known as 'a stroke', typically has the highest chance of recovery within the first 3-6 months after onset. With the help of therapy, this is the period where patients can relearn skills that they lost after the attack. From simple skills like bed mobility, sitting upright, and controlling facial muscles, to more complex tasks like walking and returning to work.



A patient like Mr. Servillano Maloloyon is a perfect example of this circumstance. Mr. Servillano came into the rehab center last February with weakness on the right side of his body and a loss of balance. Because of this, Mr. Servillano needed a cane and constant assistance in order to walk safely. As he continued physical therapy, he slowly regained his strength and balance and was finally able to walk to therapy alone without needing assistance from somebody else. As he slowly began to regain control of his gross motor skills, he also started to work on his fine motor skills. With constant therapy, he can now return to work as a carpenter and was even able to build a shoulder ladder for the rehab center.



Little hands, Big feats

Geyanne D. Geyrosaga, OTRP

As a huge advocate of celebrating wins, I'd like to showcase how my kids achieved big things with their little hands.

Blue to blue? I can do that too! – Xavier, a child with a big heart, used to write his letters so big and scattered all over the paper. Now, with guidance and reminders to follow the red and blue lines, he can write his ABCs within the guide lines of a grade one pad.



One check at a time ☒ - Zaide, a kid with an energy level that can last a whole day, used to resist writing activities and only chose to do his preferred activities. Now, with the help of his medication and proper carry-over of techniques at home, he can trace his name, finish answering a one-page worksheet, and is able to sit for a longer time. He is slowly getting

used to a routine during OT time by ticking boxes ☒ on his visual schedule every time he finishes a task.



I can dance, and cut, and color too! – Kendall, our own little 'tik toker', can surely amaze you with her tik tok dance moves! With OT, kendall is able

to showcase her dancing skills and use it as a form of gross motor exercise at the same time! Aside from dancing, kendall is also a little artist. She enjoys dipping and swishing the paintbrush and cutting paper to create unique masterpieces.

Our friendly fighter – Shannel, our social butterfly, never fails to liven the place up when she arrives. She makes sure to greet everyone in the room and put a smile on their faces. Her friendly face matches her fighting spirit during therapy. She eagerly crawls through tunnels and knocks bowling pins down all while being encouraged to use her affected hand.



Bridging is my thing! – Shanshan, our ever-cooperative fashionista, isn't known as the "Bridging Queen" for nothing. Shanshan can arch her back and raise her legs so well; our stuffed friends can pass through without a problem. Let's not stop there! Shanshan may be our next soccer star as she can enthusiastically kick balls too!



I stand with Hope – Hope, our friendly big sister, loves to gather around other kids to squeeze in some chika time during therapy sessions. Not only is she friendly, but she's also determined! She's able to stand for a longer period by holding along the ledge of the ball pit while playing with her therapists.

A Contemplative Way of Praying and Living



We hear a lot these days from Pope Francis on how he is encouraging us all to pray in a more contemplative way. A message not just for Religious Sisters and Priests but for all of us.

In our own Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Congregation we are blessed to have our own House of Prayer offering Retreats of all kinds to anyone who is searching for a deeper relationship with God. One such Retreat is a Contemplative Retreat which is based on the particular Way of Franz Jalics SJ and is sometimes referred to as the Gries Path.

During his incarceration when abducted in Argentina, and since being released, the late Franz Jalics developed the particular Way of Contemplative Praying and Living that is promoted through the Contemplative Retreats which are now also offered in other Retreat Houses due to their popularity. It is also offered on-line through Zoom. The process and inputs are the same in both.

Franz Jalics says, 'There are many paths to contemplation. I show you one of them. I'm conscious of the fact that God leads many people to contemplation without any external help. Frequently he uses natural circumstances. A simple life of love, some years on a sickbed, a brush with death, the leaving of one's homeland in order to live among the poor, and other events can lead to contemplation. I do not want to exalt my way above others. On the contrary I am very happy that they exist and I appreciate them. I myself have walked the way I describe: should it help someone else to find his or her way I am satisfied.'

This particular Way is an Introduction to a Contemplative Way of Praying and Living leading to the Jesus Prayer and is also called a 'School of Meditation' as a series of steps or 'tools' are given helping us to become more contemplative in both our way of praying and living.

During the Retreat, both Residential and On-line, there are certain meditation times requiring us all to be present as a group alongside opportunities to meditate on one's own. In praying and meditating together we experience ourselves as a community around Jesus as the body of Christ. This particular Way leads to a living relationship with God and to real relationships with our neighbour and with oneself.

The beginning of the Retreat, both Residential and on-line is spent encouraging the retreatants to go out into nature to use all our senses in heightening our awareness without thinking thus preparing the way to be 'empty' in God's presence.

As we grow into the space of being in contemplation or in meditation, we can be easily distracted with all sorts of thoughts, noises, concerns and worries etc. as we try to become completely silent within the centre of our Being and the 'Tools' will help us deal with such distractions.

This form of the Jesus prayer is different from that of the Russian pilgrim which is a petition for mercy. Here, repeating the name Jesus Christ isn't a petition nor is it a mantra, it is simply eye contact with him when we address him by his name. We encounter the person of Jesus Christ in his name.

The steps we take help us to be in loving attentive contact with him in silence with space to just be present and empty of thoughts and words in surrendering to him. We return to repeating the name, when distracted from it, not as a mantra but slowly and gently to bring us back into contact with him. To simply 'be' empty in his presence where he is accessible and where he is able to work within us uninterrupted by words of request or intercession. We are simply looking to **'be'** with him and not for what he can give us.

Each participant will be accompanied by an experienced Spiritual Accompanier each day, both on the Residential and on the On-line Retreat which is an important part of this particular Retreat.

For more information of dates & venues of the Residential and On-Line Retreats/ School of Meditation please contact: The Administrator at St. Augustine's House of Prayer: enquiries@houseofprayer.org.uk or our Contemplative Team Co-ordinator: paddyrylands@gmail.com



Understanding Charism

Trinitor Putapo



The word '**Charism**' is quite new in the Catholic Church. It entered the vocabulary after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). It is new especially in Congregations founded before the Second Vatican Council, our Congregation not excluded.

Charism is defined as a **gift of the Holy Spirit, a gift of grace** given in a particular way to an individual or to a group for the purpose of building up the kingdom of God, for the good of the Church. On speaking to the Camillian family, pope Francis said, "All charisms "are gifts that the Holy Spirit gives us ... Gifts given not to be hidden but to be shared with others. They are not given for the benefit of the one who receives them, but for the use of the People of God. If a charism ... serves instead as self-

affirmation, then it is doubtful that we are dealing with an authentic charism or one faithfully lived out. Charisms are special graces, given to some for the good of many others". They always have a transitive nature: they are orientated towards others. Over the years, you have made efforts to embody your charism faithfully, expressing it in a multitude of apostolic works and in pastoral service to the benefit of suffering humanity throughout the world."

A charism **reflects the distinctive spirituality** of the founder of the religious institute distinguishing a religious family from other forms of consecrated life found in the Church. The Second Vatican Council defines Charism as the **spirit and aims of each founder**, which should be faithfully **accepted and returned**.

Charism is the **backbone** of the Congregation. **It cannot be defined but can only-described**. It is not enough to put in a sentence for example, **'Jesus Christ and the poor', or, 'a heart for others'**, love and service, the suffering Christ, prayer as the bedrock of our lives and many other statements which we can only term as 'a motto'. Charism is also something that should be lived, in other words, it should be visible in the life of a religious within a specific Congregation. This gift from the spirit is **not static**. It responds to the needs of the time. One cannot say, 'we have always been a teaching or a nursing congregation' because the charism can not be confined to a particular apostolate.

To be continued

1. Pope Francis remarks to the Camillian Family, Vatican, March 18, 2019, <https://aaog.blogspot.com>.

2. Cf. Dan Burke, "Charism or Club? Apostolic Viae" Dec 26, 2018. <https://www.apostoliviae.org>. accessed May 22, 2019 (Perfect Caritatis No. 2).

Reflections from the Novices



MY REFLECTION ON THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST INTO HEAVEN

On the feast of Ascension, when we remember Jesus ascending to heaven, we are called to rejoice both in Jesus' victory over sin and death and the glorious life that he has achieved for us.

As Christians, our hope is secured because it rests in Jesus' death and resurrection. Because Jesus has overcome sin forever, we can live in freedom and peace no matter what situations we may face in our lives. We are reconciled to God; we are no longer strangers.

Every day we can live in confidence knowing that our God is with us to protect us, to strengthen us and to comfort us, and this is his promise to us that he will not leave us alone; He will be always with us until the end of time. God is still with us today sharing his gifts with us, because we too, are Jesus' disciples.

I pray to our Almighty Father that he may continue sending the Holy Spirit upon us, so that we may know Jesus more and more, and that the Holy Spirit continues to help us remain rooted in him.

Sister Monica Mbao



MY REFLECTION ON MOTHER MARY IN THE MONTH OF MAY

I thought of reflecting on Mary the mother of Jesus and also our mother.

Firstly I cannot forget to appreciate the knowledge of the church for always remembering Mother Mary and considering her in our church with great devotion as the mother of the Church. I feel Mother Mary will always be the good example to imitate. When I reflect on her life starting from her childhood, she was

betrothed to Joseph when she was

young and the angel appeared to her. With little knowledge about God but with the faith and belief that she had in God her response was: "...Let your will be done for I am the handmaid of the Lord'. These words really inspire me a lot and encourage me especially in my discernment. They help me to be open to the word of God and to allow God to work in me. The visitation of Mary to St Elizabeth is an example of her readiness to work in charity. Immediately she heard that her cousin was pregnant, she saw the need of helping. We are all called to do the same especially we who have devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The only thing we have to do is to ask our Mother Mary's intercession because we believe that Jesus listens to his mother as he did at the wedding at Cana. I pray for each Sister in our congregation as we discern in formation and also in on-going formation that our mother Mary may continue interceding for us as we continue saying yes to the Lord's call.

In Adoration

The majesty and splendor of Your creation
Stands still in awe and adoration.

The cool breeze rustles the trees,
the birds fly and chirp in the morning air.

Far and wide, the sounds of nature
in harmony sings their humble praise.

The sights of the great mountains,
the breathtaking view of sunrise and sunsets,
the Earth stretches in cliffs and grand canyons –
the best the world can give in fascinating colours,
could never compare to the pureness of You
in that small room, filled with red light,
atop Your small throne. Watching, gazing,
breath held, your creature beholds You.

So small, so insignificant in the vast universe
O Lord of Creation, how can You love as such?
Hands lovingly surround you with rich fabrics,
Adorn you with jewels, gold and silver,
but, there You would stand in the middle,
in simplicity, in gentleness, in humility,
waiting, gazing, longing for me.

Me?! How beautiful, how terrible,
that Most Holy One should love me so.

My mind fails to understand,
“It does not make sense,” she says
yet my heart faints.

My heart believes, though she is overwhelmed.
She weeps with bitter tears for the person
that I am, that I was,
and rejoices still in Unfathomable Truth
that God loves me.
I listen as the birds sing, to the wind passing
as they create their joyful praises
to the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings.
What else can I do? I join them.

Sister Joyce Asingua



Chigwell Garden In Summer



How lovely it is to roam around
The garden here in Chigwell's ground
And see the flowers all brightly hued.
That lift my heart from sombre mood.



The marigold's gay orange flower
Remind me of Our Lady's dower
As England once was known to be,
And see the apples throng each tree;



For as I stroll along the walk
I note the rhubarb's longish stalk,

The labyrinth there as I pass

Grey squirrel rushing through the grass;
The graveyard when my life shall cease
I'll lie among the souls at peace.



Sister Mary Pierina



Reflection for the Feast of Fr. Victor Braun

As we celebrate the Feast of our holy founder, Fr. Victor Braun, I am encouraged to once again reflect on his founding vision and desire to care for the most vulnerable. The words of (Isaiah 55.11) spring to mind "The word that goes forth from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.' Fr. Braun was familiar with these words and moved by compassion gathered our founding Sisters around him to support the most abused women in society. Sadly, today, the need to journey with women at risk is no less than it was at the earliest days of our foundation.

Prostitution and the trafficking of young girls and women for sexual exploitation continues across the globe. The physical, emotional and spiritual violence endured by all women who are degraded in this way is incomprehensible. In our modern society, we may not see as many women soliciting on the streets as brothels, hotels, private homes and escort agencies accommodate this illegal exchange of cash for sex. Women continue to be derided and prosecuted while the exploiters walk free.

As ever, the soaring cost of living impacts most severely on the poor. Governments remains silent in their response and do not fulfil their moral duty to challenge the suppliers of utilities whose profits have exploded while the poor go hungry. Some women may feel pushed into prostitution to support their families. No woman freely choses prostitution but dire circumstances may leave her vulnerable to this ultimate humiliation. The anguish of spirit that she endures is only know to herself and her God. Fortunately, some women receive appropriate support and are empowered to leave this soul-destroying trade behind and to reclaim their beautiful dignity as daughters of the Lord.

May we Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary inspired by our founder intercede for all women at risk. May we support local, global and on-line campaigns to raise awareness of this issue. Opportunities to volunteer at support services may be available or we may seek out alternative ways to offer practical help to care for our sisters in need. May all women know the love and protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary upon them. **Sister Siobhan has many more reflections on her website:**

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN ZAMBIA



Meeting with the New Minister of General Education Dr. Douglas Sikalima (Blue Suit) at his Office (MOE Headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia). On the right of the Minister is Sister Yvonne and on his left Sister Margaret from Bauleni Special Needs Project in Lusaka and Sister Muda representing Mbala SSHJM-Households in Distress Programme.



Above and right: Handover of the Project Multi-Therapy Building



Sr. Yvonne presenting the findings of the research on “Gaps that exist on Disability Policy and Practice”, which was carried out, by Bauleni Special Needs Project and SSHJM –Households In Distress Programme (HID) Mbala. The meeting was a very good interactive meeting and the Minister appreciated our Contribution as a Congregation in the education sector.



EULOGY OF SISTER CATHERINE MURPHY RIP



Since early last Thursday morning, Ascension Thursday, we have been recovering from the shock of the sudden death of our beloved Sister Catherine Murphy. May she rest in peace. We believe that Ascension Day is a good day on which to die, but this does not take away the sense of loss we all feel, especially Catherine's immediate family, her religious Community and her devoted Carers here at the Sacred Heart convent. But as St. Paul reminds us we "must not grieve as the pagans do", since we believe we will all meet again in our heavenly home.

Catherine, one of seven children, was born in New York, came to Bishopscourt, near Bishopstown, Cork, at the age of twelve. Her parents returned to Ireland once it was economically beneficial to do so. With her four brothers (now deceased) and one sister she had a happy childhood in Bishopstown. Her remaining sister - lives in New York, Nora Murray - now and to whom on this sad day we send our deepest sympathy.

With her friends and companions in Blackrock Catherine enjoyed quite a lively social life. A local priest organised drama and music clubs for the young folk and I think it was at one of these events that Catherine's remarkable singing voice began to mature. After a few short years she decided on entering the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary at Chigwell in Essex. It must have been hard for her to leave the fun and gaiety in Cork, but it was her nature to enjoy life and she took with her that great spirit of joyfulness which characterised her life.

After a few years she completed her novitiate and then her teacher-training there was another change to come in her life. She was chosen to make a new foundation in California. She responded with enthusiasm. She was already an American citizen. She felt as if she was going home.

Catherine remained in California for the remainder of her life, with teaching as her main ministry. Her competence as a Principal was greatly valued.

After a life devoted to teaching she and her special friend, sister Margaret Healey (also from Cork), undertook assisting their local Pastor. They lived simply in a small mobile home on the church premises. This home was a centre for all sorts of counselling, for advice, language teaching, or whatever the need might be. The local bishop was curious as to what the Pastoral work of the Sisters was all about. The pastor informed him that each Sister did more work than any parish priest.

My own memory of Catherine in California in the early 2000's, when she was well into her eighties, was to see her driving on the great freeways. She seemed at home on these great motorways between San Francisco and Sacramento and throughout and the San Joaquin Valley in California. Nobody could doubt her competence in driving even at that age. She was like something you might see in one of the Hollywood films.

Farwell dear Catherine, may the choirs of angels come to greet you as you arise driving and singing praises to the Lord on His feast of the Ascension.

We will miss your gentle presence and look forward to our joyful reunion one day in heaven.



EULOGY OF SISTER EILEEN HENNEBRY RIP



Today we celebrate the life of Sister Eileen Hennebry, who was taken quite suddenly from us last weekend (10 June 2022). The Sisters, her family and Staff will miss her presence but she has left us with some lovely memories that will keep her always in our hearts.

She was a gifted person, with a great sense of humour, a ready wit, and warm love for people. She inherited much of these gifts from her family in Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary. These gifts stood her in good stead for the variety of ministries she became involved in during her long life as a Sister of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Eileen's first assignment was to serve as a founder member of our first school in Central Africa in 1963. This was named Lwitikila Secondary School for Girls in the northern province of Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia. A mission in Central Africa in those far-off days was challenging to say the least. But Eileen's faith and courage were strong and she was not easily deflected once her mind was set, in fact one of her frequent sayings was "Stick to your guns!!" In a couple of years, she and her Companions had established a large boarding school which today continues to flourish and to serve the northern part of Zambia. She enjoyed her teaching ministry in Africa, most especially she delighted in

joining the young African girls in their singing, since she was gifted with a fine singing voice herself.

On returning to England Eileen spent some years teaching young women with Special Educational Needs. In this area she made a unique contribution to the pastoral care and welfare of this group under the Suffolk Education Authority.

Looking at Eileen's amazing life of service and the astonishing number of people whose lives she touched would take too much time to describe, but I'll be brief since this would be her wish.

Her last twenty years of active ministry were spent at Clare Priory, Suffolk, a retreat centre run by the Augustinian Fathers. Under the direction of Father Benignus O'Rourke, she guided people in their spiritual lives especially in their prayer lives. Augustinian spirituality appealed to Eileen since, like our own spirituality of the Sacred Heart, it is centred on the heart. She felt at home at Clare Priory, set in the beautiful East Anglian countryside and sharing in a ministry she enjoyed.

As we bid farewell to Eileen today I think it might be appropriate to close with the well-known words of St. Augustine:

"Thou hast made us for thyself Oh Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee."



Editorial Team:
Sr. Anne Griffin & Sr. Barbara Dundon
Chigwell Convent,
803 Chigwell Road,
Woodford Bridge IG8 8AU
Tel/Fax: 020 8506 0359
Email: communications@sacredheartsjm.org
www.sacredheartsjm.org

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