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# PACE E BENE

SUORE FRANCESCANE MISSIONARIE DEL SACRO CUORE



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## **WORLD CALL for PEACE...**

From 23 to 25 October 2022 at the “La Nuvola” Congress Center, the International Meeting of prayer and dialogue for peace among world religions was held in Rome, entitled “*The cry of Peace. Religions and Cultures in Dialogue*”.

The closing ceremony took place at the Colosseum, with the presence of Pope Francis.

It was the XXXVI International Meeting of Dialogue for Peace that “continues to spread the spirit of Assisi”, as requested by the Holy Pope John Paul II in the city of St. Francis on 27 October 1986, at the conclusion of that first historic Day of Prayer.

Since that day, the International Meetings of dialogue and prayer for Peace more and more represent as a moment of great importance for the construction of peace, dialogue and universal fraternity.

In addition to thousands of people, this year’s initiative was attended by the leaders of Christian Churches and major religions, together with high-level representatives of international politics and culture.

The meeting took place over three days:

23 October, Inaugural Ceremony at the “La Nuvola” Congress Center

24 October, thematic forums at the “La Nuvola” Congress Center

25 October, Final Ceremony at the Colosseum



The following are the themes on which the various personalities presented their reflections.

The titles themselves reveal the crisis, the difficulties, the aspirations, the desires and the commitments that world leaders are and must face:

*The cry of Peace*

*Mother earth: one planet, one humanity*

*The great opportunity. Migrations and the future*

*Whoever saves a life saves the whole world*

*Prayer, root of peace*

*War challenges the future of Europe.*

*Shared Easter: from dream to necessity to unite the world*

*The Word of God generates dreams*

*Religions, dialogue and peace*

*1962-2022: the Cuban crisis and nuclear risk, yesterday and today*

*Mediterranean, the plural sea*

*Nobody saves themselves: dialogue and multilateralism in a divided world*

*Living together: the lesson of the pandemic*

*The responsibility of religions in the crisis of globalization*

*Media, social networks and the cry for peace*

On the last day, the theme of the closing ceremony was, Prayer for Peace in different places, in fact, representatives of other religions gathered in prayer in other places in Rome.

At the closing celebration at the Colosseum, the Holy Father Francis presided over the prayers of Christians. At the end, he went on stage together with the various representatives where the international meeting took place and the beginning of the ceremony at the end of which the Appeal for Peace was read.



In his speech, Pope Francis once again invoked a prayer for Ukraine also for all the other areas of the world plagued by conflicts because we are “in the third world war”.

*This year our prayer has become a “cry”, because today peace is seriously violated, wounded, trampled on, and this in Europe, that is, in the continent which in the last century experienced the tragedies of the two world wars - and we are now in the third. Unfortunately, since then, wars have never stopped bloodying and impoverishing the earth, but the moment we are experiencing is particularly dramatic. For this, we have raised our prayer to God, who always hears the anguished cry of His children.*

*Hear us, Lord!*

*The invocation of peace cannot be suppressed, it rises from the hearts of mothers, and it is written on the faces of refugees, families on the run, the wounded or the dying. This silent cry rises to Heaven. It does not know magic formulas to get out of conflicts, but it has the sacrosanct right to ask for peace in the name of the suffering suffered, and deserves to be listened to. It deserves that everyone, starting with the rulers, bend down to listen with seriousness and respect. The cry for peace expresses the pain and horror of war; the mother of all poverty...*

*In this dark scenario, where unfortunately the plans of the mighty of the earth do not trust the just aspirations of the peoples, God’s plan for our salvation does not change, which is “a plan of peace and not of misfortune” (cf. Jer 29 ,11).*

*Here the voice of the voiceless finds a listening; here is the foundation of the hope of the little ones and the poor in God, whose name is Peace. Peace is His gift and we have invoked it from Him. However, this gift must be welcomed and be cultivated by men, women, especially by us believers and us.*

*Let us not let ourselves be infected by the perverse logic of war; let us not fall into the trap of hatred for the enemy. Let us place peace at the heart of the vision of the future, as the central objective of our personal, social and political action at all levels. We resolve conflicts with the weapon of dialogue...*



After the Pope's speech, a minute's silence was observed in memory of the victims of the war and then the **APPEAL FOR PEACE** was read, which we report here:

*Gathered in Rome in the spirit of Assisi, we prayed for peace, according to the various traditions but in agreement.*

*Now we, the representatives of the Christian Churches and of the world's religions, turn thoughtfully to the world and to the leaders of the States. We speak up for those who suffer from the war, for refugees and for the families of all the victims and the fallen.*

*With firm conviction we say, no more war! Let us stop all conflict.*

*War brings only death and destruction. It is an adventure, in which no gains but we are all losers.*

*Arms are to be silenced, a universal ceasefire is declared immediately. Negotiations capable of leading to just solutions for a stable and lasting peace should be activated soon, before it is too late.*

*Reopen the dialogue to cancel the threat of nuclear weapons.*

*After the horrors and pains of the Second World War, the nations were able to mend the deep wounds of the conflict and, through a multilateral dialogue, to give birth to the United Nations Organization, the result of an aspiration which, today more than ever, peace is a necessity.*

We must not now lose the memory of what a tragedy war is, a generator of death and poverty.

We are at a crossroads, to be the generation that lets the planet and humanity die that accumulates and trades weapons, in the illusion of saving themselves against others. Instead let us be the generation that creates new ways of living together, not investing on in arms, abolishes war as a tool for resolving conflicts and stops the abnormal exploitation of the planet's resources.

We believers must work for peace in every way we can. It is our duty to help disarm hearts and call for reconciliation between peoples.

Unfortunately, we too have sometimes divided ourselves abusing the holy name of God: we ask for forgiveness, with humility and shame.

Religions are, and must continue to be, a great source of peace.

Peace is holy, war can never be!

Humanity must end wars or war will end humanity.

The world, our common home, is unique and belongs not to us, but to future generations. Therefore, let us free it from the nuclear nightmare.

Let us immediately reopen a serious dialogue on nuclear non-proliferation and the decommissioning of atomic weapons.

Let us restart together from dialogue, which is effective medicine for the reconciliation of peoples.

We invest in every avenue of dialogue.

Peace is always possible! No more war! Never again against each other!



**BLESSED JOHN PAUL I:  
A SPECIAL GIFT ALSO FOR US,  
FRANCISCAN MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE SACRED HEART**

On 4 September, Pope John Paul I, called by all “the Pope of smiles” became Blessed.

His pontificate has been defined as a “meteor”, for the brevity of only 33 days, but a luminous meteor that has left a trail in the history of the Church and of humanity. Albino Luciani in fact made a gift of himself with the virtues that have always characterized him above all, humility, simplicity, goodness, tenderness and joy that beamed from his face and which he communicated with his smile.



This is how Pope Francis presented him in his homily on the day of his beatification, *“the new Blessed lived like this: in the joy of the Gospel, without compromise, loving to the end. He embodied the poverty of the disciple, which is not only detaching oneself from material goods, but also above all overcoming the temptation to put one’s self at the center and seek one’s own glory. On the contrary, following the example of Jesus, he was a meek and humble shepherd. He regarded himself as the dust on which God had deigned to write. Therefore, he said, “The Lord has so much recommended, be humble. Even if you have done great things, say, we are useless servants”. With a smile, Pope Luciani managed to convey the goodness of the Lord. A Church with a happy face, a serene face, a smiling face is beautiful, a Church that never closes its doors...”*

*Let us pray to this father and brother of ours, let us ask that he obtain for us “the smile of the soul”, the transparent one, the one that does not deceive the smile of the soul. Let us ask, in his words, what he himself used to ask, “Lord, take me as I am, with my defects, with my shortcomings, but make me become as you desire me”.*

This Pope, humble and simple, in his journey as bishop and patriarch has “touched” some of our communities, leaving among our sisters examples of “daily”, profound holiness.



He was bishop of the diocese of Vittorio Veneto from 1959 to 1969 and therefore also of our community in Savassa-Forcal, in the parish of Santa Giustina opened in 1958.

The nursery school was inaugurated on 31 May 1959 with the blessing of the bishop of Vittorio Veneto, Mons Albino Luciani.

We have simple but significant testimonies that he appreciated our sisters so much and in the pastoral visit, in a note from Sr Alessandra Paron, Bishop Luciani had used this expression, *“Those sisters up there know how to do so much good”.*



In the period as Patriarch of Venice (from 1969 to 1978), the communities of Stretti di Eraclea and Alberoni benefited from his presence.

Unfortunately, we have no writings from the communities but from the recollections of some sisters we know with certainty that the presence of Patriarch Luciani was constant and faithful, despite his various commitments. In the parish of Stretti he was never missing for the celebration of the sacraments and he always proved to be simple, affable, with his smile and his ability to approach anyone, with his manner that put everyone at ease. A special love was felt for children and for their journey in faith; he was an excellent catechist and his way of relating and sharing the faith clearly manifested it.

He used to go to the Venice Lido especially during the summer and stayed with the Sisters of Maria Bambina, but from the memories of our sisters, we know that he often went to celebrate the Eucharist in our community.

*Two sisters who had the grace to meet him tell us about their experience*

### **IN STRETTI DI ERACLEA (Sr Miranda Sforza)**

When ever I go to Rome, if I can, I always go to the tomb of Pope John Paul I to pray. Sisters who accompanies me or sees me going , asks me, what devotion do you have for John Paul I?



As a child, I remember him very well when on the occasion of the Sacrament of Confirmation he came to the parish where I lived in Val Casoni di Eraclea.

He was a very simple Patriarch; he loved coming to us small children and asking us many questions.

I remember that, myself being very lively and active the catechists always asked me to approach him; the others were fearful and ashamed....

Later we moved with the family to a nearby village, Stretti di Eraclea, and when the day came when my companions and I would receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, what wonderful news the parish priest Don Carlo Tomasini gave us, when he told us that the sacrament it would have been conferred by the Patriarch himself.

In reality Mons. Albino Luciani almost never missed these celebrations. His attitude as well as being simple, humble was that of a "parish priest".

On the evening of August 26, 1978, I still remember the church bells ringing in



**Parish church of  
Stretti di Eraclea (Venice)**



**Sacrament of Confirmation in  
Stretti di Eraclea (Venice)**

celebration, I went to the nursery school to find out why there was so much pealing...the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, with great joy promptly told me that "our Albino Luciani was elected as Pope".

Soon the square was filled with many parishioners who thanked God with me for this choice, not only because he was the Patriarch of Venice but above all because he would be a true father to all the children who had been entrusted to him.

On the occasion of his Beatification on September 4, 2022, I must confess that I cried almost the entire Holy Mass,

which I followed on television, because having had the honor of knowing such a man "human and attentive to neighbor" demonstrated with his life that God he is not only Father but also Mother.

This strongly challenges me in my being consecrated, in the daily life that I live in the service that I am called to perform. I thank the Lord for the gift received and I entrust myself daily to his paternal protection, certain of his support.

### **An unexpected meeting with Albino Luciani Patriarch of Venice. (Sr. Renza Venturin)**

Yes, that meeting which took place in the first week of August 1978 is still vividly impressed in my memory, two years after the terrible earthquake in which Gemona del Friuli was literally destroyed, forcing the sisters of the infirmary to find accommodation in the beach community, of the Franciscan Missionary sisters of the Sacred Heart at Alberoni.

During the school holidays, I was called to give my service to the elderly sisters in the Alberoni house. Alberoni is a small town in the municipality of Venice, located at the end of the Lido of Venezia coast between the sea and the lagoon. Not far from the ancient town of Malamocco, the Alberoni belongs to the municipality of Lido Palestrina.



**Pallestrina (Venice)**

To reach this locality, and provide service to the sisters in the infirmary, the sisters necessarily had to take the vaporetto, (steamboat) the only means that made it possible for them to cross the lagoon.

It was I Sr Renza Venturín, at the end of my service, to return to the Community of Cammino al Tagliamento, that day I took the vaporetto, directed to the Venice Central railway station, unaware that this way was frequented by the workers, was also frequented daily by Patriarch Albino Luciani.

I did not know him and his way of dressing did not allow me to recognize him.



The patriarch, I learned from the people, made this journey every day to greet, talk, get to know the workers, to pray with them and bless them.

That day after the blessing, he came and sat next to me. He asked me which congregation I belonged to, where I came from, where I went,

what service I performed and then he asked me to pray Lauds with him (during those 41 minutes of travelling).

All this was lived with absolute simplicity and humble fraternity. Arriving at the station, taking leave, he asked me to pray a lot for him, because, he told me: "in 5 days I have to go to Rome to the conclave to elect the new



Pope".

Then my eyes were opened and I recognized that He was the Patriarch of Venice Albino Luciani.

When he was elected Pope with the name John Paul I, remembering this personal meeting, my heart was filled with profound joy.

## World Mission Day

**“You will be my witnesses”** (At.1,8).

### Missionary Mandate

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”.* (1Thes. 5:16-19)

Quoting these words of St. Paul, I am extremely glad to say “YES” to the Almighty for His abundant Blessings upon me.

I express my gratitude to my superiors for choosing me as a missionary to Istanbul, Turkey, where to work with people of many religions.

With my whole heart with great joy, I said “YES” to the Lord by putting my confidence in the ever-flowing grace of my Divine Master for an effective mission for His glory.

It is always not easy to leave one’s people and country, culture and traditions, and be planted in a very unfamiliar situation.

I trust and I open my heart to the invitation “to leave and go” to the unknown place like our Father Abraham. Reaching in Italy my first venture is to learn Italian to communicate with my sisters so I started to frequent the language school. It came as a great surprise for me when Sr. Paola told me about the celebration of the missionary mandate of the diocese of Rome and I was chosen to participate in.



Great emotions rolled in my heart when I sat along with the other missionaries chosen for the mandate; they are meant to go to different parts of the world, like to Amazonia, Indonesia, Papua Nuova Guinea etc.

I felt as if the mandate is not limited within my Congregation but we are sent by the Holy Mother Church. I felt so privileged. I was the only one going to Turkey.



On 15 October in the Basilica of St. John Lateran, the diocese of Rome celebrated a Mission festival with the theme, “You will be my witnesses” (At.1:8). The celebration started at 15.00 with a beautiful concert giving meaningful songs and in between there were very effective and inspiring testimonies of the missionaries from different parts of the world.

We were about 28 religious ready to receive the mandate and leave for different places to live the “Mission ad gentes”.

Some representatives of us also expressed their great joy in receiving the mandate and being sent in the manner of Jesus and the disciples.

It was indeed an atmosphere of great joy. The vigil prayer was well animated with beautiful singing and readings. Bishop Benoni Ambarus, diocesan delegate for Charity and for Migrants presided over the celebrations.

In his homily he reminded us of our privileged choice to be missionaries for the Lord in the lands far away and to people unknown, but with the assurance of His words: “I will be with you till the end of times”.

The bishop blessed each one and gave a crucifix and bible as symbol of our mandate: “light for our feet” and food for our nourishment.

I experienced a great feeling of joy, assurance and courage to go wherever I am sent. I also felt the protecting hands of our Blessed Mother ready to accompany me on my journey forward.

I thank all, especially Sr. Paola Dotto our superior general who gave me such an opportunity to participate in this moving celebration and also her presence and that of many of our sisters who came to celebrate the mission festival and my missionary mandate.

*Suor Bindhu Joseph Kolencherry*



## **CHILDREN of the WORLD... PRAYING for PEACE**

On 18 October, for the first time after the lock down and the restrictions that covid brought with it, the children of the Asisium primary school returned to the chapel of the Institute.

The emotion pervaded everyone: those who returned and those who entered for the first time.

The former once again raised their eyes towards the mosaic of St. Francis and were able to reconnect with the dialogues of the heart that had remained suspended; the others were enveloped in an embrace of light, colors and shapes that leaves an indelible mark on anyone who enters our chapel for the first time.

Sister Ernesta, the coordinator of the school, following the initiative of the Pontifical Foundation, “Aid to the Church in Need” (ACS) which has once again invited parishes, kindergartens, schools and families to participate in the annual prayer meeting “One million children pray the Rosary”, wanted to give a strong sign of recovery that brings real change, allowing children and teachers to pray in the church.

“A million children pray the Rosary” dates back to the year 2005, when a group of children was seen praying the Rosary in a shrine in the Venezuelan capital, Caracas, and some of the adults who witnessed the scene recalled



the words of St. Pio of Pietralcina, “When a million children pray the Rosary, the world will change”.

“It is particularly moving to know that there are children in Iraq, Syria, Belarus or Myanmar who pray together with those who gather in Fatima, Portugal, Canada or the United States. It gives us hope that the love that comes from faith can triumph over violence”, said Father Martin M. Barta, international ecclesiastical assistant of ACN.

We have united in communion of prayer with the whole world and have experienced the emotion that Father Barta speaks.

Anyone who has been to church with our pupils has witnessed the power of children’s prayer: silence, concentration, the unison recitation of the Ave Marias, all made true dialogue with Jesus possible.

“A Million Children in Prayer” was born from the awareness that, if entrusted to the little ones, the prayer is truly capable of bringing peace.



Especially the prayer of the Rosary, as John Paul II wrote in the Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, “One cannot recite the Rosary without feeling involved in a precise commitment of service to peace”.

Even Pope Francis at the end of the Angelus on October 17 exhorted us to unite in entrusting “to the intercession of Our Lady the martyred Ukrainian people and other populations suffering from war and all forms of violence and misery”, and added, “Prayer is the medicine of faith, the tonic of the soul.

*However, it must be a constant prayer. If we have to follow a treatment to get better, it is important to observe it well, to take the medicines in the right way and on time, with constancy and regularity. Everything in life needs this. Let us think of one plant that we keep at home, we have to feed it consistently every day, and we cannot soak it and then leave it without water for weeks! Even more reason for prayer, one cannot live only on strong moments or intense encounters so often and then ‘go into hibernation’.*

*Our faith will dry up. There is a need for the daily watering of prayer, there is a need for time dedicated to God, so that He can enter our time, our history; of constant moments in which we open our hearts to him, so that he can pour love, peace, joy, strength, hope into us every day; that is, nourish our faith. May the Virgin Mary, faithful in listening, teach us the art of praying always, without tiring.”*

Our teachers and our children allow themselves to be educated by these words of Pope Francis and are constantly engaged in the exercise of prayer, because, as Saint Francis teaches us: “We should not strive so much to pray as to become a prayer ourselves.”

On 18 October at Asisium we witnessed that the children themselves were prayer.

## **The cry for PEACE...**

**In the Primary School of Centocelle,  
in the Nursery School of Colonnata  
and in the Family Homes of Lido dei Pini**

“What would happen if a million children asked the same thing at the same time?”

On 18 October, thanks to the Million children prying initiative, one million children around the world prayed for peace.

We too, as the Institute of Mary Immaculate, have joined this children’s choir to raise our prayers to God and implore the gift of peace throughout the world.

A video was presented to the children of the kindergarten and primary school classes that would arouse in them the right motivation to feel an important part of this great prayer.



Then, opening a rosary with their little fingers, one by one they prayed aloud the first part of the prayer to which the rest of the class responded.

The children in each class prayed a decade of the rosary together in the certainty that the Holy Mother will hear their prayer. Even the boys of IV and V, on a trip through the streets of Rome that day, joined the prayer of a million children, on the bus.

### **In Colonnata (Florence)**

Children should enjoy the time of their childhood, spend their childhood with serenity and peace with family, friends, games, etc., but unfortunately, this is not the case. There are many “big” men who do not want them happy, even their right to be is stolen. Instead of finding a world that loves and protects them, a world that gives them hope, at their birth they find a world where there are men who want and who wage war, sow destruction, horror, hunger and death.

What world do we want to leave to these children? What future do we want to donate?



Despite their innocence, not all these things are unknown to children, they feel them very well on their skin and we feel so much pain for the reality of suffering that they first undergo, for all the consequences they experience because of the war; they are the first victims.

Precisely because we have in our hearts the cry for peace that rises from many parts of the world, every day in our kindergarten we pray an invocation to Mary for peace.

On 18 October in a particular and significant way, we participated in the prayer invitation “A million children pray the Rosary”, so that the



peace hoped for by all may triumph especially in the country most tormented by war.

The children march enthusiastically from school across the garden to the chapel at the community convent where signs are prepared that have aroused curiosity about the meaning. In answering their interesting questions, we began with a simple catechesis on prayer, unity and peace.

This brief introduction made the children participate more in prayer, the small voices that came from their hearts resounded which spoke to the Father’s Heart through Jesus, Mary with the Spirit.

It was a prayer made with love, with so much hope and great faith, an expression of the lively desire to obtain the gift of Peace for every heart, for every family, for every nation and for the whole world. Mary, Queen of Peace, pray for us! So be it!

## **In Lido dei Pini**

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now!

On the afternoon of 18 October, our children and teenagers from the Lido dei Pini Family Homes also gathered at the invitation of Pope Francis to pray the Holy Rosary to obtain the gift of peace from Jesus, through Mary.

The Sisters also participated, singing “Ave Maria” for each decade.

The prayer concluded with the consecration of the children to the Heavenly Mother, expressing the desire to give her all their heart and to belong forever to Jesus.



## Children committed to peace

Some particular circumstances did not allow us to experience the world day of children's prayer for peace.

However, in every meeting of missionary childhood, we have emphasized the need to be peacemakers in daily life and we have invoked the Lord to grant us peace.

And it was still under the sign of peace that we experienced the closing day of activities in Carlepont.

A day offered to all the children who took part in the meetings but also to their friends, brothers and sisters.

The children appreciated the numerous games loaned and installed by generous parishioners in the courtyard of the Sisters' house which, on that day, had become the "courtyard of peace".

After a few songs, known and loved by the children, we all prayed together to give thanks for the past school year, to entrust everyone's holidays to the goodness of the Lord and humbly beg him to give peace to the world.



Everyone pledged to build peace and reconciliation even during vacation time.

A beautiful and warm day of sharing and joy for everyone!

*Laetitia Marcerou,  
animator.*

## *The invocation of Peace from the voice of the little ones in Lithuania*

Already from the day after the invasion of Russia into the Ukrainian territory (February 24) each teacher received personally, in his e-mail, a letter from the director of the Franciscan Lyceum Fr. Alvydas Virbalis OFM who invited us all to pray for peace.

So every morning before starting the first lesson, whatever it was, everyone stops us to recite together, in the school hall, the prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi.

When in the month of March the Ministry of Public Education addressed the schools asking them to welcome the young refugees of the war, the prayers and works of charity became even more intense.

The most engaged were the elementary school children. They were not only the first to memorize the prayer proposed by the principal, but they also wanted to paste drawings illustrating the values of prayer itself to the windows of the school: peace, friendship, love, unity, concord and many others; in this way they wanted to convey the message of peace also to those who pass by the school.



So Pope Francis' invitation to pray with the little ones did not surprise us, but encouraged us and made us feel even more united in our supplication. Then, on the occasion of the solemnity of Saint Francis, on October 4, we began the day by praying all together for first and second grade children. The whole day was dedicated to the theme of peace and we all begged the Lord to give peace to the world and above all to the countries overwhelmed by the horror of war.

As long as the war persists we will pray together every morning sure that we will obtain this gift.

*Sr Julija Lucauskaitė*



## **FROM THE SCHOOLS IN CAMEROON**

### **BILINGUAL SCHOOL GROUP “S. MARY OF THE ANGELS”- NKOABANG**

*October 18, World Day of Peace.*

Following the international community, the “BILINGUAL SCHOOL GROUP “S. Mary of the Angels”, united with the whole world, celebrated, in a special way, this international day of peace which has as its theme: “END RACISM, BUILD PEACE”

Better to build peace, our day was organized and lived in the following way:

- 1) Opening of the day with a prayer of St. Francis: “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace...”
- 2) Afterwards, the reading of the Gospel of St. John (Jn 14:24): “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you...” and sharing
- 3) A brief teaching on PEACE: how to relate to live well together, solidly and continuously, based on mutual respect, serenity, and friendliness
- 4) Personal motivation to live in the school environment, in the family, and where ever we are, the aspect of the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi.

Anything that starts well ends well; it was a very beautiful and meaningful day for everyone.



**BILINGUAL SCHOOL GROUP  
“ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS” - KRIBI**

**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR PEACE.**



*Make me  
an instrument  
of your peace*



The Bilingual School Group “St. Mary of the Angels” in Kribi joins her voice to that of the whole Church, today, October 18, 2022, following the invitation of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, to pray for peace in the whole world.

This day has as its theme: “PUT AN END TO RACISM; BUILDING PEACE”.

In the morning, during the gathering, we sensitized the children by talking to them about the importance of peace which is a human and Christian value and, as citizens, we have a duty to promote it within our institution, and above all in our dear and beautiful a country that has been experiencing instability for some years and finally in our Mother-Church.



## In communion with the Church

During the moment of Angelus prayer, led by the children of the Great Section, at 12 noon precise, following in the footsteps of that great man, Saint Francis of Assisi, whose spirituality is always present in the world and in the Church, we have made one of the prayers referred to him: “Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace”.

Then we entrusted the whole world to the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of humanity.

To the GLORY of GOD



## "MA LAURE"

### CATHOLIC BILINGUAL NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL NJIMAFOR-BAMENDA.

On October 18<sup>th</sup> 2022, the pupils and the staff of Ma Laure Catholic Bilingual Nursery and Primary School Bamenda joined their voice with that of the universal church through the invitation of our Holy Father Pope Francis to pray for peace in the world.

When we got the information, we couldn't help but intensify our prayers for peace coupled with the fact that our Region has been witnessing instability for the past six years with the socio-political crisis in Cameroon.



Holy Mass was celebrated at 9:00am for this very intention by the Parish Vicar Fr Bazil Berinyuy a Conception Priest in the school campus.

During his homily he exhorted us to pray and practice peace and love at our various levels, avoid conflicts and work for unity.

He also urged us always to pray the prayer for peace by Saint Francis of Assisi "*Lord make me an instrument of your peace*" and pray our guardian angel for protection.

To end the day, after the angelus in the various classes we prayed three Hail Mary for peace in the world.



## The Franciscan Centenary

*To continue walking in the footsteps of the Poverello of Assisi*

On October 31, Pope Francis received in audience, in the Clementine Hall of the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican, the members of the ecclesial coordination for the VIII Franciscan Centenary, the Committee for the Centenary of the Franciscan Family and other members of the same Franciscan Family. There were about 300 participants in the audience: in addition to the members of the Franciscan Family, the Bishops of Assisi, Rieti, Arezzo and the civil authorities of the Franciscan places in Italy also took part in the audience.

Fr. Massimo Fusarelli, Minister General, greeted the Pope in the name of all present and presented the program of the Centenary of the Franciscan Family:

*“I address you together with the Minister General of the Friars Minor Conventual and that of the Secular Franciscan Order. We thank her for welcoming us into your home as a Franciscan family. We are preparing to open the Franciscan Centenary which will allow us to retrace the last years of the life of the Poverello, marked by important moments in his human and Christian journey”.*

*In 1223, St. Francis was able to give his brothers the definitive text of the Rule, as a sign of the covenant that God had made with the poor. Immediately after that in Greccio Saint Francis experienced the Christmas with the poor peasants of that region that allowed him to “see with his own eyes the poverty in which the Son of God wanted to be born” (Thomas of Celano).*

*In 1224, La Verna awaited the Poverello for the encounter that made him similar to the Beloved, the seal of his journey of faith and following of the poor and crucified Christ.*

*In 1225, the now blind Saint Francis sang the beauty of creation, our common home, with the Canticle of the Creatures, a Christological hymn to the Father’s work of love in the world.*

*1226 marks the Easter of Saint Francis, who goes to meet death “terrible and detestable to all”, calling her “sister”, because it leads to the definitive encounter with the Lord...*

*The moment that the world is experiencing in this time, the synodal journey that is affecting the whole Church, the Holy Year now upon us, are the environment in which we prepare to live the stages just mentioned. In fact, we do not want to celebrate the Centenary in the confines of our family but with women and men of good will, with all Christians for the good of the world that God loves”.*





The Pope thanked Br. Massimo for the words addressed to him and expressed his joy at meeting the Franciscan Family “*in the vicinity of the eighth Franciscan Centenary (2023-2026), which promises to be a pilgrimage that starting from the Santa Rieti Valley, passing through La Verna, it will arrive in Assisi, where it all began*”. His words recalled the choice of his name: *When I chose to be called Francis, I knew I was referring to a saint who was so popular, but also so misunderstood. Indeed, Francis is the man of peace, the man of poverty, the man who loves*

*and celebrates creation; but what is the root of all this, what is the source? Jesus Christ. He is in love with Jesus Christ, who in order to follow him is not afraid to make a fool of himself but goes ahead. The source of all his experience is faith..*

The Pope then exhorted them how to live this centenary journey..

*The next Franciscan centenary will be a non-ritual recurrence, if it knows how to decline both the imitation of Christ and love for the poor. And this will also be possible, thanks to the atmosphere that emanates from the various Franciscan “places”, each of which has a particular character, a fruitful gift that contributes to renewing the face of the Church.*

*Pope Francis has invited everyone to go back to the school of the poor man. After eight centuries, St. Francis still remains a mystery. Just as Fra. Masseo’s question remains intact: “Why does the whole world follow you, and every person seems to want to see you and hear you and obey you?”*

*To find an answer it is necessary to go to the school of the Poverello, rediscovering in his evangelical life the way to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. In concrete terms, this means listening, walking and proclaiming to the peripheries.*



The Pope concluded his speech by encouraging the Franciscan Family “*to fully experience the awaited Franciscan Centenary*” and his wish is that “*this spiritual and cultural journey can be combined with the Jubilee of 2025, in the belief that St. Francis of Assisi still pushes the Church today to live her fidelity to Christ and her mission in our time*”.

**From the Conference of the Franciscan Family**

**2023 -2026**

**A centenary articulated and celebrated in several centenaries**



The five centenaries are part of a single thematic project, which will develop gradually and harmoniously according to the chronology of the events celebrated..

**The 800 years of the Later Rule 1223,  
of Christmas in Greccio (2023),  
of the Stigmata(2024),  
of the Canticle of Creatures (2025)  
and, at its peak, of Francis's Easter (2026).**

The key themes proposed for the centenary celebration will be considered from multiple perspectives, present in every celebration, which specifically refer to the theological dimension (Our being in Christ), anthropological (Our being brothers and sisters), ecclesiological (Our being in communion) and sociological (our being in the world).

The celebration of the centenaries basically has the aim and finality of decisively orienting our gaze towards the future and charismatically strengthening our Franciscan identity.

As a Franciscan Family, we want to celebrate, together with all those who feel attracted by the evangelical beauty of the Poverello, these centenarians who offer us a precious opportunity to revive the richness of our charism with a prophetic gaze towards the future. In addition, we want to do it according to the logic of the gift received and given...



His whole life was a path of life “sine proprio” that is of restitution, from the beginning of his conversion. Because only the man, who keeps nothing for himself, but gives himself entirely, manages to walk in fraternity, guided by the desire for the Supreme Good. *“And let us give back to the Lord God the Most High and Supreme all goods and acknowledge that all goods are His and let us give thanks to Him for all, because they all come from Him”* (Earlier Rule 17, FF 49) .

The ‘Poverello’ was able to recognize that everything in his life was a gratuitous gift of God’s love, as he himself affirms in his Testament. *«The Lord told me to begin to do penance... the Lord gave me brothers... the Most High himself revealed me that I had to live according to the form of the holy Gospel»* (Testament 1-14, FF 110-116).

Not only did he receive divine gifts but he also chose to give them back, so today, 800 years later, as a Franciscan Family, we can celebrate these five centenaries that invite us to live according to the logic of accepted love, which becomes donation and restitution.

Let us begin, sisters and brothers, because now it is our turn to share and give back these gifts that Brother Francis has given us.



**Imagine representing the themes of the centenaries**

**The DIALOGUE to be continued  
in order to grow in relations among RELIGIONS**

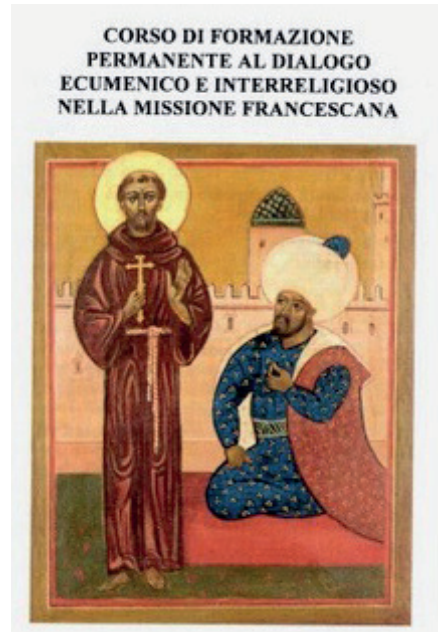
The historic meeting of St. Francis and Sultan Malik al-Kamil inspired Pope St. John Paul II in 1986 to invite the world religious leaders to Assisi to pray together for peace.

These are his words. *“This event shows that men and women of prayer, without abandoning their own traditions, can engage in prayer, in working for peace and for the good of humanity. The Church must continue to work and promote this spirit of encounter and collaboration at all levels.”*

Pope Francis, since the beginning of his pontificate, has given great importance to cultural encounters and interreligious dialogue.

His visits to some of the Muslim majority countries: Turkey, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Morocco and Bahrain have been appreciated and are significant in finding global solutions to the issues faced by the world community. *“As Christians and Muslims, we believe in God the Creator who created men and women and placed them on earth to live together peacefully as brothers and sisters, respecting each other’s differences and helping each other in their needs. He has entrusted us with the care of the earth, our common home because we deliver it intact to future generations.”*

The course that we, Sr. Diomira Cavasin and Sr. Mercy Parampakath, attended in Istanbul, has given the emphasis on DIALOGUE.



It was the 16<sup>th</sup> ongoing formation course on ecumenical and interreligious dialogue in the Franciscan mission and it took place in the international Fraternity of Santa Maria Draperis in Istanbul from 16 to 30 October 2022. There were 22 participants from different countries. The meeting was in Italian, English, French, Spanish and Turkish. Important personalities from various religious denominations shared their ideas and opinions on Interreligious Dialogue..



The topics treated for the group according to the Franciscan charism were, Ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Orthodox; Islamic-Christian interreligious dialogue; Anthropological and intercultural perspectives; the challenges and the future of interreligious dialogue. The program also included a pilgrimage to the seven churches mentioned by St. John in the book of Revelation and also to the house of the Virgin Mary in Ephesus. Various testimonies of this un-stoppable process, followed one after another during the days of the conference. The Imam of Smyrna Cahit Saglam, H.E. Dimitrios Salachas, representative of the Orthodox church, the representative of the Armenian church, and of the churches of the Reformation, the visit to His Holiness Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I were the important personalities who enlightened our minds on the theme. The prayer according to the spirit of Taizé and the moment of prayer of the Verbisci, everything focused on the theme mutual understanding and dialogue.

Knowing is also admitting that the other person experiences something essential and important in his or her faith. Every dialogue presupposes a conscious identity in order not to get lost and assimilate to the other. God the Creator forms us gradually in dialogue, Genesis 2, 21-23; 3.8-10.

We are all strangers and pilgrims (Deut. 26,5) but God looks at the stranger, at Israel which cannot boast of any merit, it welcomes Him, it becomes His people. Israel is chosen but other peoples are also saved in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Dialogue is a form of life, only if we accept that

we lack something can we dialogue, the self-sufficient person doesn't dialogue, he doesn't have any need. Various speakers spoke of the risk of dialogue because in an authentic relationship we must accept the possibility of being hurt, of exposing ourselves to the risk of the other in order to seek the truth by putting together the various relationships-dialogues. The other makes me understand that I am a stranger to myself because in the dialogue I know things about myself that I would never have thought of cultivating, both positive and negative. A deep, true, daily relationship with God allows us to have new and positive relationships with others: we recognize that the other also experiences his religiosity as important, fundamental for his life and in dialogue; we give each other the opportunity to get to know each other. God dialogues with humanity in a unique but not exclusive way. Being open, looking and listening to the other strengthens and enriches our experience in the interreligious and ecumenical field. Creating spaces for encounters, living with differences, sharing knowledge, being in the middle without abolishing diversity, taking on the weight, the conflict without running away because the humility of recognizing ourselves as creatures unites us. St. Francis listened and spoke to the Sultan as a man of peace: interreligious dialogue starts from knowledge, from listening while maintaining one's identity. May the example of St. Francis continue to guide the steps of all those in the Church, in the world who want to continue to dialogue in order to be men and women of Peace, of unity, and of Good.



## A CHARISM THAT HAS CONTINUED FOR 150 YEARS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

On November 19, 2022, in the jubilee year of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of missionary service in the Middle East, we FMSC sisters of the “St. Elizabeth” Province celebrated, with sentiments of gratitude and praise, the solemn closing of this memorable event for the history of the entire religious Family. The jubilee was a time of grace for us because it reminded us of all the journey done during these 150 years and of the many sisters who lived and transmitted with missionary zeal, humility and self-denial the charism given by the Holy Spirit to our Founders Laura Leroux de Bauffremont and Father Gregory Fioravanti.



Listening to the past, often marked by greater suffering and new difficulties, lived by the first sisters with courage and fidelity, was a fruitful opportunity to understand how vital our charism is. Starting from 1872 until today, the missions of the East embrace the challenges of the time and reinterpret the



charism giving life to numerous expressions and works, fruit of divine Providence.

The sensitivity in the midst of the different religions, cultures, customs and traditions that has distinguished the missionaries of the East continues to be a founding element for the Province.

The international aspect of the communities, the multicultural and multi-religious society, the respectful dialogue and the acceptance of the poorest, are an evident example of how much the charism, entrusted to us by the Founders and the first sisters, continues to spread this “sacred history”.

In addition to being a solemn celebration, the jubilee was for all of us the occasion for a renewed missionary ardor that embodies the charism in everyday folds with creativity and simplicity. It also confronts us with a great responsibility: we are called to recognize what the Lord has done for us during these years and lay the foundations for the future.



The jubilee event was attended by the Superior General, sister Paola Dotto, sister Tiziana Tonini Vicar, sister Rose Thomas Palamthattel and sister Gregoria Suarez Medina General Councillors, Sister Stefania Bandiera, Provincial Superior of the Province of “S. Maria degli Angeli”, Sr. Clare Poothakuzhiyil, Provincial Councilor of the “St. Francis” Province, Sr. Lilibeth Labian, Provincial Vicar of the “Mary Immaculate” Province, Sr. Beltha Ngwashi, Vice-Provincial Superior of the “SS. Martyrs of Uganda” and Sr. Diomira Cavasin who contributed to the historical research of our Province.

Our missions in Cyprus, Lebanon and Bulgaria were also represented by some sisters. In the joyful presence of the sisters we narrated many stories, people and events that happened, initiatives that build bridges between the continents where the Religious Family is present. In the exchange of life and experiences we have written a new page of history which tells of the marvels of the Lord.

On 17 November 2022, the solemnity of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, patroness of the Province, the arrival of the sisters from different parts of the world in Limassol began the jubilee celebrations.



Upon their entrance, in the external courtyard, they were received with a warm welcome by the pupils and teachers of the “Santa Maria” school.

The first to welcome them were the kindergarten children with all the flags of the 22 countries of the world, where the FMSC are called and sent to carry out their missionary service. The welcome with the typical perfumed essence with which the guest is sprinkled on the hands and the incensing with the dry branches of the olive tree was touching.

Under the blue sky, waving banners, flowers and little hearts rang out the melodious voices and songs in English, Greek and Italian from the elementary and secondary school. It was truly surprising how this celebration involved professors, teachers and students... Orthodox, Latinos, Maronites, whites, blacks, Europeans and non-Europeans.



All “different” and all the same, together, on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the FMSC presence in the Middle East.

Together, in a school open to children and teachers of all nationalities and all religions without exception, following the example of the first missionary sisters in the Middle East.



On 19 November 2022, in the school theatre, the closing of the jubilee year was celebrated with a solemn Holy Mass presided over by His Excellency Mons. Adolfo Tito Illana, Apostolic Nuncio in Israel and Cyprus and delegate in Jerusalem and Palestine.

With His Excellency, many priests concelebrated: Mons. Selim Sfeir, Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus, priests of the island, Latins and Maronites, and from the Custody of the Holy Land. In the presence of civil and religious authorities, numerous faithful, pupils and former pupils, teachers and former teachers, parents and collaborators, under the angelic voices of the school choir, the celebration was a hymn of praise and gratitude to God for the collaboration of many sisters and people who in the 150 years of history have illuminated the transmission of the charism with their own testimony of life.



During his homily, Archbishop Adolfo Tito Illana highlighted the historical signs of the start of the mission in the Middle East and underlined above all the strong desire to announce the Gospel of the first sisters who arrived in Constantinople.

In direct participation in the missionary activity of the Church, among the faithful and the unfaithful, the FMSC sisters carried out their pastoral works with fidelity and apostolic zeal, drawing profound benevolence from the Heart of Christ Crucified.

The life of prayer and penance is the fundamental source for evangelization, for education and for works of charity - substantial elements for the mission which must prompt us to choose the existential peripheries above all where faith is lacking. Being meek, humble, charitable: these characteristics must distinguish our life as Franciscans and missionaries today.

Only in this way can missionary service become a sacrament of the presence of the Lord Jesus, Archbishop Illana reiterated.

The education of the younger generations following the example of the first sisters in mission lands is the prerequisite for the proclamation of the Gospel.

Therefore, accompanying young people in their growth, in their moral and spiritual maturation remains the primary investment which creates the conditions for welcoming the Good News.

Furthermore, evangelization characterizes us as missionaries and we must take charge of it in all forms of our apostolic service.

In turn, the Superior General Sr. Paola Dotto expressed her gratitude for the 150 years of generous service in the Middle East of all the FMSC sisters, called and sent to 22 countries around the world.



The Superior General highlighted the courage of faith and trust in the abandonment of the Father's will, which led the first sisters in paths that were not always simple and easy.

*"To Him I wish to return all the good done in these 150 years; all the love given in the various forms of mission; all the faith lived and all the charity shown to so many brothers and sisters, to poor children, entrusted to our sisters"*.

In the certainty that the names of all the sisters who have worked in the various realities of the "St. Elizabeth" Province are resounding in heaven before the Lord, Sr. Paola Dotto expressed her homage for their example of unconditional self-giving, generous fidelity, true missionary spirit.

She concluded with affectionate gratitude to the sisters who are living their mission today in Cyprus, Bulgaria, Lebanon and to *"all those who, in the Church and in society, have placed themselves attentively alongside with our sisters, with our communities, with their missionary service, giving fraternally support and help, sharing efforts, joys and hopes"*.

Concluding, the Superior General invites us to hope *"which makes us look to the future in the certainty that the Lord will continue to guide and complete His work"*.

Before the final blessing, the Telegram of His Holiness Pope Francis was read on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the presence and mission of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart in the Middle East.

His auspicious thought is addressed to the entire Congregation and exhorts that the anniversary revive in the sisters the resolutions of generous adherence to Christ and joyful witness of fraternal life.

For the happy jubilee solemnity, the celebrant presented the Apostolic Blessing that His Holiness imparts to all the Sisters of the "St. Elizabeth" Province, invoking a special outpouring of heavenly graces on all of them to strengthen the commitment of continuous fidelity to God and to the Church and of ever more generous response to vocation.



On behalf of the Order of Friars Minor, the greetings of the Minister General Father Massimo Fusarelli, ofm were read. By entrusting the journey of the Province to the Immaculate Virgin, with the blessing of St. Francis, through the intercession of St. Elizabeth and following the example of the Venerable Father Gregory, he hopes for an ever more prophetic and joyful response to live always “as it is pleasing to God”.

To crown the Eucharistic celebration, some girls from the school swayed on stage narrating the expansion of the missionary charism through a beautiful choreography that ended with an explosion of applause.



After the Eucharistic celebration, the second part of the event followed. The book “*Wisdom, patience, the ardour of good*” written by prof. Ulderico Parente.



In the presentation of historical events, illustrated by images of the past and present, not only was the competence and profound reflection on events and people tasted but also the passion with which prof. Parente narrates the heroic sacrifice of many sisters who, in attentive and respectful dialogue, dedicated to the educational mission through schools open to all and charitable activities, lived the Gospel with “very high seraphic poverty”.

The difficulties and sufferings that the sisters experienced in the thorny political-social reality in Turkey, Cyprus, the Greek Islands, Bulgaria, Lebanon were illustrated. The moving applause of those present demonstrated the fond memories and deep gratitude in reviewing the images of so many sisters, past and present, who have worked without reserve in the missions in the Middle East.





To crown the celebration, in the internal courtyard of the school, on the external stage of the theatre, the school choir, made up of about a hundred youth from all linguistic sections, performed folk dances and songs in various languages.

A grandiose spectacle that united heaven and earth in thanksgiving for so much generosity, zeal and missionary passion of all the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart in these 150 years.

May the Lord make us fruitful leaven so that the charism continues to bear abundant fruit for the holy Church of God!



## Opening of the Centenary of “St Mary’s School” Limassol 1923 - 2023



In the festive scenery of the closing of the 150th anniversary of our presence in the Middle East, another jubilee anniversary offers us the opportunity to recall the marvels that the Lord has accomplished through the educational mission of the FMSC in Limassol.

With the grace of God, the “Saint Mary’s school” of Limassol in Cyprus is about to celebrate its 100th anniversary. In fact, in 1923, the Sisters, at the request of the Franciscan Fathers of the Holy Land, gave life to the “Holy Land” school for the poor Catholic girls of Limassol, thus responding to the specific mission of the religious family: devoting themselves to teaching and educating some children.

The number of students increased rapidly because, faithful to the spirit of openness and charity, the sisters did not limit themselves to the Latin or Maronite community, but welcomed students of all religions and cultures with joy. The quality and seriousness of teaching, the climate of discipline and benevolence, the spirit of generosity and understanding:

fundamental elements of teaching have encouraged many families to entrust their daughters to the sisters.

In the 1960s, another more spacious, bright and functional building had to be built. On 11 February 1965, under the maternal gaze of Our Lady of Lourdes, the foundation stone of the new school was blessed, inaugurated on 19 June 1966 by Mons. Alberto Gori, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and was called the “Saint Mary’s school” and is still functioning until today. Around the year 2000, it was decided to welcome boys as well and to evolve with the times.

In recent years, the school has seen almost a thousand students enter its walls in September, from kindergarten to high school. Pupils from all continents, nationalities and religions easily mix and create a very beautiful atmosphere of formation. The ideal choice persists, to teach a large number of subjects, of course, but with particular attention to languages: Greek, French, English and Italian. With its longevity and dynamism, the school continues to perpetuate both Christian traditions and spirituality.

In fact, the pupils wear the uniform of the Marian colors.

They gather every morning for prayer and sing glory of the Lord.

They all participate together in religious and civil celebrations.

They follow the teaching of languages, of religion; they have the possibility of choosing between the scientific or the literary branch.



They receive a basic education with the priority of essential values, such as charity, sincerity, humility, responsibility, hard work and respect for others. These principles and choices have allowed and still allow the school to shine and stand out among the other schools on the island, which now, at the height of its one hundred years, can look to the future with confidence.

On November 21, 2022, the liturgical feast of the presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the school patron's feast day, with the Eucharistic celebration, presided over by Father Peter Ashton ofm, we opened the jubilee year of "Saint Mary's school". The presence of the Superior General, Sister Paola Dotto and her Council, the sisters who have come from different parts of the world, school leaders, teachers and students made the day memorable and significant. With such simplicity, the students, both Catholic and Orthodox, animated the celebration with songs, readings and the offertory. The boys are always immediate, therefore, it was not difficult to understand the explosion of applause when the Superior General, Sister Paola Dotto lit the jubilee candle.



One hundred years! The undertaking is indeed very demanding and arduous, but as Pope Francis indicates, education is the best way to humanize the world. The centenary certainly opens up this horizon for us, which for us FMSC is a matter of loving responsibility. The first sisters in the Middle East were attentive to the challenges of society, therefore, we too are invited to seize educational emergencies, collaborate to find solutions, propose new models that instill hope and make the world more human. With emotion we can repeat the words of Father Teofilo, Apostolic Prefect of the East - "Believe that, God is glorified by this Work, which He Himself inspired...".

At the end of the celebration, the feast was adorned with an artistic program performed by the pupils of all language sections. The drawings of the little ones, exceptional and colorful, embellished the environment reminding us how beautiful our school is at the jubilee age of one hundred years.

We appreciated the tireless work of the teachers and professors who are collaborating with great openness in the educational process that the school offers, thus embracing the essential values of respect, fraternity and common home, in the spirit of Francis of Assisi and the first sisters.

We hope that the centenary of "St. Mary" will reveal new strategies so that, maintaining the fidelity of the origins, we can look to the future with the same dynamism that has marked the educational spirit of the FMSCs in the Middle East over the centuries.



## From the diary of the pilgrimage in Cyprus

The Provincial Sr. Antonia Piripitsi organized for the sisters present at the celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their presence in the Middle East, days to visit the significant places of the culture and history of Cyprus on pilgrimage. For the day of November 20, the destinations are Troodos, Kykkos.



Troodos is the largest and highest mountain range in Cyprus, located in the southwestern part of the island. Here the sisters have a house with a beautiful little church; they come for the summer spiritual exercises and for periods of rest. It is a house located in a beautiful place in the woods, where silence and nature reign. During the journey, we admired the mountains, beautiful nature, the sea in the distance; really a beautiful place! We visited the house, the chapel; we experienced a beautiful moment of fraternal Franciscan joy and then we left to be able to go to Kykkos, where there is a monastery, which is one of the three largest on the island.

In Greek, the monastery is defined with the adjective “royal” because it was built with the help of the Byzantine emperor Alexius I Comnenus. It is dedicated to the Virgin Mary, whose feast is solemnly celebrated twice a year: on August 15 (Dormition of Mary) and on September 8 (Birth of the Virgin). In this monastery, there is the icon of the Mother of Merciful God, which, according to tradition, was painted by the holy evangelist Luke.

An ancient tradition claims that the Archangel Gabriel gave to Most Holy Mary, some wood taken from the Tree of Life. She then gave it to St. Luke, who used it to paint three pictures of the Child Jesus.

The Holy Virgin herself said in front of this icon: “The grace of Him whom I have carried in me lives in it”.

We visited the parts of the monastery open to the public enchanted by the marvelous icons and the preciousness of the gold. Each icon invited us to contemplate, to touch with our hearts the events of Jesus’ life, of the Gospel, to taste and feel the presence of the “divine” in us and with us.



In the afternoon, we visited the place where the tomb of Makarios is located on a hill. Throughout the journey to go to the tomb and descend, you see many icons of saints from the New Testament and the Orthodox Church; a true path that makes you touch holiness expressed in so many faces and in so many ways.

The program for today 22 November is a visit to Kiti, San Lazzaro and the community of Larnaca. In Kiti, we visited Panagia Angeloktisti, which literally means, “Built by angels”.



According to the legend, in fact, in the 5<sup>th</sup> century the inhabitants of Kition (present-day Larnaca), due to frequent raids by Arab pirates, decided to move inland, and founding the village of Kiti. While they were building, a church dedicated to the Mother of God, during the night they saw the hosts of angels move its foundation to another location and build it.

We continued the pilgrimage to go and see the garden of San Lazzaro and then his tomb.

The church of San Lazzaro is a church from the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

According to orthodox tradition, sometime after the resurrection of Christ, Lazarus was forced to flee Judea due to plots for his life and came to Cyprus. There he was appointed by Paul and Barnabas as the first bishop of Kition (modern Larnaca). He is said to have lived for another thirty years and was buried there on his death. The church of San Lazzaro was built on the assumed tomb of Lazarus.

Before returning for lunch, we went to see the sisters of the Larnaca community. Unfortunately, it was not possible to enter the house and stay with them because for a few days they had two elderly women positive for Covid and no one was allowed to enter the house. We met them in the garden with so much joy and emotion.



Today November 23<sup>rd</sup> we went to visit places in the area occupied by the Turks. We had to carry passports and cross the border with both Cypriot and Turkish control.

The first stop on this trip was the village of Bellapais, which is located at the foot of the Besparmak mountains. It is dominated by the abbey of Bellapais, whose current name is the Abbey of Peace. The building is considered a masterpiece of Gothic art and the most beautiful in the Near East. We visited the abbey, a magnificent monument that bears the signs of time and of the various historical periods that have changed it. Now its remains can be contemplated with parts still resisting the corruption of time.



The journey continued towards Kormakiti taking a route along the coast, a wonderful landscape of the Kerynia area. As we got closer, we could see the signs of the occupation, the abandoned houses. We stopped at the beginning of the village in a little chapel that is very dear to the local population and then we went to the sisters' house, which is near the parish. We stopped to pray in the parish church and then we went to the house of the sisters who welcomed us with great joy. They told the story of the Kormakiti mission and the experience of the Turkish occupation. Many sisters come from this village.

Today November 24<sup>th</sup> we visited Salamis, the tomb of San Barnaba and Famagusta.

These places are also in the Turkish area and we reached them through the border held by the British base. First stop was Salamis, which was an ancient polis on the east coast of Cyprus, six kilometers north of modern day Famagusta. The oldest archaeological evidence dates back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC.

The spectacular ruins of Salamis give a glimpse of lost civilizations, and include a magnificent amphitheater, Roman baths, a gymnasium and royal tombs.... and much more to discover.

We then went to visit the tomb of San Barnaba. Information about St. Barnabas comes from historical sources. Born in Salamis, he was the son of a Jewish family. After his education in Jerusalem, he returned to Cyprus and, in A.D. 45 he joined St. Paul to preach Christianity. He was killed by Jews and his body was hidden so that it could be thrown into the sea during the night.



Some of the disciples of St. Barnabas witnesses of what had happened took the body and buried it west of Salamis together with the bible of St. Matthew, which he always carried with him. The place where St. Barnabas was buried remained unknown. After 432 years, the burial place was revealed to the Vesc Anthemios in a dream..

He ordered the tomb to be opened. The bible of St. Matthew found in the tomb was proof that the remains were those of St. Barnabas. We stopped in prayer in front of his tomb, invoking his faith and his missionary spirit for all.

We continued the journey to the center of Famagusta, a city that was originally a small trading port and fishing village and in the 1300s; the city was home to many Christian religious orders.

In 1974, the Turkish army invaded the northern part of Cyprus; weeks were dramatic: the 45,000 Greek inhabitants hurriedly left the city, leaving everything as it was.

Cyprus was divided in to two, Famagusta remained in the Turkish part. Since then, Greek residents have not been allowed to return to their city, not even to recover their possessions.

Visiting Famagusta now is like taking a journey through time. The shops have been looted and what remains is still forty years ago.

Meanwhile the palaces, houses, bridges, streets give way to the elements. The city dies, it is impossible to enter, it is impossible to visit, the few photos that exist describe a weird atmosphere of death, slow but inevitable.



Hearing the history of Famagusta, seeing the ghost towns, entering the Catholic basilicas now transformed into mosques touched the hearts of all of us. We went to see (only from the street) the school and the house where our sisters were; here they had a community with a big school. We could only stop in front of the closed gate. The sisters explained to us that where there is the statue of Ataturk, there was St. Francis. How much pain and how much sadness!!

There are no words. Only a deep pain that grips the heart and a silent prayer to the Lord that evil does not win over good. We resumed the return journey continuing to pass close to totally enclosed areas of the city and the countryside where it is not possible to go.

We have seen abandoned houses; people left hastily in fear and where no one has yet been able to return. Who knows until when and if there will be a return! The Turkish Cypriot flag fluttered everywhere, a sign of power and of an occupation that continues to generate fear and suffering. When we returned to the community, we were able to hear the voice of the sisters who lived through those moments. They narrated how they had to leave the house and school in a hurry; they thought of getting away for just one night, but it is a night that lasts for more than forty years and still does not see the rise of a new dawn.

Today, November 25, the pilgrimage destinations are Curium and Pafos.

Curium was a Cypriot city, which lasted from antiquity to the early Middle Ages. Today the site is located within the British military base of Akrotiri and Dhekelia.

This magnificent city is believed to have been destroyed in the 4<sup>th</sup> century when a series of five major earthquakes struck it over the span of around 80 years, and this would inevitably lead to its demise.

From Curium we headed to Pafos.

At the time of the Roman Empire Paphos was the capital of the island; vestiges of that past remain in the ruins of the Governor's Palace, embellished with splendid mosaics. Because of its famous archaeological remains, Paphos was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1980.

It is also mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (13; 6, 11). Founded at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, and originally surrounded by massive walls, Nea pafos was the ancient city of Paphos. Conquered by the Romans in 58 BC, it continued for centuries to be the political and administrative center of Cyprus. Paphos was where in AD 47, the Apostles Paul and Barnabas converted Proconsul Sergius Paulus to Christianity, making Cyprus the first area to be ruled by a Christian.

Here is the column of St. Paul, where the Apostle was bound and scourged.

Next to it are the remains of an early Christian basilica built in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

The lived experience helped everyone to understand more deeply the richness of the history, of the



culture of Cyprus. Above all the journey of faith, of self-giving, of love also lived by our sisters called to manifest in this reality, through missionary work, the redemptive love of the Heart of Christ Crucified which needs to reach the heart and life of every person.

With our sisters, we can present to God all praise and all honor to Him who is the Supreme Good and the Author of all Good.



## 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the presence and mission in Prague

### REMEMBER TO GIVE THANKS

Yes, remember to give thanks.... Thus, born the idea, suggested by our parish priest, Father Timothy, to celebrate our 25 years of our “presence in the reality of Prague”. This, in fact, was our mandate received from the Superiors in 1997, but solicited by Cardinal Vlk who had expressly asked the superiors of the time for a “Religious community of presence in the post-communist Prague”.

Nothing more. A generic mandate and it seemed to us, apparently devoid of a precise program.

For this reason, the action of the Spirit took place, which, day after day, opened our eyes and allowed us to see precisely those realities that correspond to our charism as Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

After all, even the cardinal himself, whom we immediately asked how we could be useful, answered very briefly, “Always keep your eyes open, look around you and immediately do what you see as most necessary”. Incredible... Again, he urged us to keep an eye out...

For this, we entrusted ourselves totally to the Spirit who, day after day, opened our eyes and allowed us to see precisely those realities, which not only correspond to our charism, but also seemed to us to be the most neglected by the local Church in Prague.

Let us sing with joy, it’s a feast! Looking at the photos in the “book”, in fact, one is struck by this.

The Holy Spirit has guided our steps by showing gradually our various situations of hardship, loneliness, poverty, abandonment, carelessness, the fruit of so many years of Communism.

For this reason, perhaps, our parish priest and all the people who know us in the 3 parishes have been admired by our simple and daily gestures of concrete help, of listening, of closeness to so much suffering and loneliness, often ignored even by the people of the “church”.





In his homily at the Holy Mass, solemnly prepared for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and concelebrated by 6 priests, he recalled some important people at the beginning. Here are some excerpts, “Welcome to the Superiors from Italy and thank you for sending us the Sisters.

We welcome the parents and their children who sang in the choir and who were educated by the sisters (two generations). All these people are their big family. In these 25 years, the sisters have carried out so many activities that we cannot even imagine.

From heaven, we are now looking at Cardinal Vlk who invited them to this mission and their unforgettable first pastor Hlavacek who welcomed them into the parish.





Our church is crowded today with people from the 3 parishes. Therefore, if we had wanted to invite all those whom they have served and helped, they would not have found a place because among them are prisoners, the homeless, disabled children and adults, often left alone in institutions, the elderly in rest homes. But when one day we will sit with the Lord, then we will see all the crowd of their beneficiaries and benefactors”.

Concluding his homily, Father Timothy invited parishioners to take inspiration from our concrete way of relating with others, with the least, to continue that activity or apostolate, which is typical of the Church willed by Christ and, by Pope Francis, called Peripheral church. In other words, putting the latter at the center. Be aware of their silent presence.

Therefore, the celebration of this anniversary was more solemn than we could have imagined and deserved.

Prepared with care and sacrifice first of all, not only by the parish priest, but also by every member of the parish community who saw the involvement of the little ones who played and led the songs of the mass, to the older ones who also collaborated in preparing lunch outdoors for a lot of people.



This gave us so much joy, because we noticed that the Czechs tend to be a people.

Closed and reserved, they managed to create an extended family with the faithful of the three parishes.

Now everyone knows each other by name, they exchange telephone numbers more and more often and they collaborate splendidly on all the initiatives.

How far away are the times when people left mass and everyone ran home without saying goodbye or stopping for a chat...

Now, however, they know each other by name, they meet after every Sunday mass, in a parish hall, to have a hot drink and eat the sweets they themselves bring. In addition, they are all willing to listen to those with problems, to help, to enjoy what life offers us together.



A sincere Thank You goes to Sr. Stefania who, together with her Council, organized the visit for this occasion, to experience such a significant moment with us. Unfortunately, due to unexpected events, Sr. Miranda and Sr. Chiara are not here, but we know that spiritually they have been close to us.

Moreover, we thought about them a lot too. With joy and emotion, we looked at the photo of the 3 courageous “pioneers”: Sr. Ines, Sr. Giordana and Sr. Daniela who arrived in Prague on 10 December 1996, the feast of Our Lady of Loreto, after whom this community was named, to seek God’s will in this post-communist land.

A heartfelt Thank You to each of them for having started this mission, even though then the Province did not have so many personnel.

PRAISE THE LORD for all of this and for what is in the heart of each of us.

*Prague, 15 October 2022*

*Community “Our Lady of Loreto”*



## FIRST PROFESSION of Sr. JEVELINE SHIAYUBOH MAGAH and Sr. MICHELLE DIMBECK

During the octave of the solemnity of the Assumption of our Holy Mother, the Virgin Mary, the Lord once again wanted to manifest His great love for us. We are granted the grace to consecrate ourselves to Him through our vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in the hands of our Superiors, on Saturday 20 August 2022, in memory of the Holy Virgin and the feast of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux.

The culminating point of this day was the Eucharistic celebration, which began around 10.30 am, in our beautiful parish of “Saints Anna and Joachim” presided over by the parish priest Rev. Fr. Martial Bidoung Mvodo (O.C.D.) who focused his homily on two aspects and centered on the texts provided for the occasion.

The first aspect concerned about thanksgiving to the Lord and thanksgiving and encouragement to the parents for having offered us as a holocaust a sacred offering to the Lord like that of Abraham in the first reading (cf. Gn 22, 9-18). It is because, all that would have been useful to us as riches and honor on this earth, we have renounced for the benefit of the graces prepared by God in the kingdom of heaven. Furthermore, he exhorted the family members to support us in the life choice made, by praying for us.

The second aspect was intended for us. From the second reading (1 Co 7,25-35) and the Gospel (Luke 14, 25-33) he pointed out of the importance of abandoning everything to follow Christ in order to be totally faithful to him in our consecrated life. One must live without a husband, love the Lord single hearted and to do what is pleasing to Him and to be conformed to His laws and decrees. For us, this is living chastity: giving up everything (the desire to have a family, to have a job, goods and properties, the freedom to dispose our life...) to marry “Lady Poverty”, trusting in the Lord through obedience to our Superiors. It is, therefore, a question of the experience of poverty and obedience and all this in view of the following of Christ and in the hope of eternal life.

However, to reach this goal, the celebrant left us these recommendations as a “viaticum” with these words, *“My daughters, be faithful to four essential things in the life you have chosen, reading the Word of God, fraternal life and community, the Eucharist and prayer”*.



Afterwards, we continued the rite of profession of our simple vows, wearing new religious dress and taking on new names: Sr. Maria Jeveline of the Five Wounds and Sr. Maria Michelle Archange of the Passion of the Christ.

After this beautiful Eucharistic celebration, we invited all the faithful present, religious, acquaintances and friends to take part in the refreshments provided.

As a sign of testimony, we wish to say that during this period of initial formation, the Holy Spirit helped us to open our hearts to the knowledge and experience of the Holy Gospel, and directed us to follow the Rules and Constitutions of our Institute. Through a life of prayer and penance, living a fraternal life according to the Franciscan spirit we make a total self-denial and offer ourselves to the Lord (cf. F. 3, 226 – Directory 1895).

The in-depth knowledge of our Founders, of the tradition that they passed on to us through our charism which is that of “the contemplation of the Heart of Jesus Crucified” has so seduced us that the storms and spring times spent with Christ were moments of endurance and prayer to get closer to his heart.



We are very grateful to our Superiors, the Mother General and the Vice-Provincial, to their Councils as well as to the formators of various stages, Postulancy and Novitiate and to all our sisters for all the direct or indirect formation opportunities we have received. Today, we are truly proud and happy to be called, Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

A heartfelt thanks to each of our sisters for their participation in various forms for the success of this event because, as is often said: “One does not become religious alone, but with others”.

May the Lord bless you all!

Since we are not perfect people, but always on the way to perfection, allow us to recommend us to your prayers so that the seed hidden within us may germinate, bear good fruit and attract numerous vocations to religious life in the Church and especially in our family.

Thanks to the intercession of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, whose feast we celebrate today, that we be zealous and loving servants of the Word of God to face the challenges of today’s world by presenting the merciful face of Christ.

We too assure you of our affection and, despite our weaknesses, you can count on our prayers

**GLORY AND PRAISE TO GOD!**



## Sr. Saritha Perumallapalli Forever FMSC sister

"May your life be a continuous thanksgiving to the Lord"

(Ven. Fr. Gregory Fioravanti)

I am impressed by these words of our founder venerable Fr. Gregory, I gladly lift my heart to the Most High God, who called me out of my nothingness and loved me with an everlasting love. 21<sup>st</sup> August 2022 is an ever memorable day in my life, the day that touched my heart with deep joy and gratitude, which cannot be explained in words and deeds.

With all that I have and all that I am going to possess, I have said "YES" forever to the Lord by putting my confidence in the ever flowing grace of my Divine Master.

As our beloved Fr. Gregory says "*Marvelous are the ways of the Lord and no one has the right to ask why in this way and not otherwise.*"

So I have decided that marvelous works of the Lord in my life, which strike my heart and mind to be thankful to Him now and always.

He who is rich and generous in His steadfast love had stretched out His hand to embrace me as His spouse and to empower me as His witness to stand before the world and to share His love and mercy with all the people around me.

The simple words of thanks will never be enough to give expression for my gratitude to the Lord God who filled my heart with an overflowing joy. My heart continuously and melodiously sings the hymns of thanksgiving to the Lord.



I am very glad to express my deep gratitude to my religious family of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, a loving family which resembles fraternal Holy Family here on earth.

It is a great privilege for me to be a member of this Family forever.



I am indebted to express my gratitude to my Mother General Most Rev. Sr. Paola Dotto and her councillors and my provincial superior Rev. Sr. Mini Joseph and her councillors for granting my request and for accepting me as a member of the congregation to serve the Lord and His Holy Church.

All the people who participated in the celebration have raised their hearts to God on my behalf to thank Him and prayed for my bright future.

During the Eucharistic celebration while delivering the Homily Monsignor Rev. Fr. Gabriel Mesapam exhorted that God calls us from our nothingness for a deeper immersion to Him and to be sent.

He Himself remove our unworthiness, purify us and strengthen us for His use.

The relation between Him and we are said in the Holy Gospel in a simple way like the true wine and the branches.

Unless having a close relation with Him we are not at all able to do anything. Religious are the ordinary people surrendered themselves forever to the Lord through the vows and establish an internal relationship with Him. In this challenging world to be faithful to this life.

I am really very grateful to all who are one or another way helped me to reach this stage of my life. Trusting in God's infinite goodness I place my hands in His Hands and joyously walk along with Him. With heart full of joy I Thank each and everyone.

*Sr. Mary Saritha Perumallapalli of the Infant Jesus*



## Sister Jaida Gustaham offers her YES forever to the Most High

### *MY GRACE IS ENOUGH!*

In this world, everything is temporary and time flies so fast. I think back to the events of my life ... as if it all happened yesterday. In 2012 I joined the Religious Family of the FMSC. I went through the stages of formation, following the poor and crucified Christ. This year, with the grace of God, I reached the decisive YES and I had a memorable day.

Everything in life has a purpose and each of us experiences God in a unique way. In fact, my calling was quite a big surprise. It had never crossed my mind, not even in the family had we ever talked about this form of life. As my father was a Muslim, none of us were baptized, even though our mother was Catholic. I came to Cyprus for work and to be with my mother.

I never imagined that this was only the beginning of the transformation of my life and above all the beginning of my “calling”.

I questioned the purpose of my life after I was baptized, right here in Cyprus. The intense experience of love leads to an intense response to love. I felt very powerful in me the love of God and the blessings overflowed. I immediately responded to this love and my life changed quickly.

The sentiments of love at first sight changing one’s outlook on life.

On the solemn feast of the Guardian Angels, October 2, 2022, my Perpetual Profession took place in Limassol, Cyprus. The celebration began with a brief introduction on the FMSC Congregation



followed by the entrance hymn: “Beautiful angel, my guardian, so meek, guide me tenderly, because I am your daughter”.

With the Rite of Religious Profession, I was called by name in front of the entire assembly present: a multi-ethnic Church full of faces and customs. During the homily, the celebrant, His Excellency Mons. George Panamthundil, Chargé d’affaires at the Apostolic Nunciature in Cyprus, described what a religious vocation is.

It is God himself who falls in love with the individual and the response to this love is poverty, obedience and chastity.

Poverty is an expression of faith, willingness to abandon everything and follow the Lord everywhere. Obedience is being humble in order to submit to God’s will in order to be happy. Chastity is taking up the Cross and following Jesus.

One of the most moving moments was when, while singing the Litany of the Saints, I prostrated myself in front of the altar.

As if all the angels and saints sang and prayed together with the assembly. With firm faith and sure will, I made a vow to God in the hands of Sister Antonia Piripitsi, Provincial Superior, delegate of the Superior General Sr. Paola Dotto and in the presence of all.

After I signed the formula of vows, the celebrant handed me the Cross and the Bible.

I had everything!



At the moment of the announcement of my permanent membership in the Congregation by the Provincial Superior, I could not hold back the tears of the immense joy that invaded me.

The Holy Mass concluded with the hymn of the Magnificat: *“All that I am sings to God who gives birth to new life in me. My spirit flies on the wings of my Lord ...”*

I would like to sincerely thank my friends who have come from Nicosia, Larnaca and Limassol.

The Church was full of beautiful people, smiling young people and many faithful who accompanied me in this significant moment.

My sincere thanks go to all the religious who participated in it, to Father Ibrahim Khita and to the Maronite community. I thank the priests of the parish of Saint Catherine, Father Lorence Koblavie and Father Peter Ashton. My gratitude to His Excellency Mons. George Panamthundil for the Eucharistic Celebration. It is an honor and a privilege for me to share with you the infinite joy of my Perpetual Profession.



I extend my gratitude to our Congregation, to the Superior General Sr. Paola Dotto and to the sisters of the General Council. I am grateful to the sisters from the various Provinces, to the Provincial Superior Sr. Antonia Piripitsi and to all the sisters of our Province of St. Elizabeth of Hungary.



I would like to thank all the formation houses in which I have lived and all the sisters who have been with me during the journey of formation. I also thank my spiritual mothers and fathers and all my formators. You are all a gift from God to me!

I thank my native family for their love and support. Even though my parents and grandparents weren't physically present, I know that, from heaven, they were celebrating and glorifying God.

O Lord, Almighty God, I thank you for the gift of life, for baptism and for the special calling.

You are the reason for my happiness because nothing else can fill my soul like You. I will love you, glorify you and praise you always, Lord Jesus Christ. Your grace is enough for me!

*Sister Jaida Gustaham of the Infant Jesus*

## ON MISSION IN THE SCHOOL WITH FATHER GREGORY

An occasion, an opportunity, the idea and the desire to live together the unique experience of celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of our Founder, Fr. Gregorio Fioravanti.

To give shape to this desire, a team was formed of sisters from the Provinces of “St. Mary of the Angels” and of “Mary Immaculate”, who were assigned with the task of organizing a well proposed program to present the teachers and students the figure of the Founder Fr Gregory and thus celebrate him in his 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth.

The team of sisters: Sr Francesca Fiorin, Sr Miranda Sforza, Sr Mara Lorenzet Sr Lilibeth Labian, Sr Aileen Flores, Sr Marta Lucatelli and Sr Gabriela Mamani came together, shared ideas, and confronted each other to make this opportunity to work together and make Father Gregory known to the students and teachers of our schools.

They planned, the first stage of the program: in Gemona in the first days of October when St. Francis day is celebrated and the second stage: in Rome in the last week of October.

The program envisaged separate initiatives in accordance with the respective school levels.

For the children of kindergarten school, a good story through a Power Point that introduced the children to the background of Fr. Gregory’s origin: the family, the vocation and the mission.





In the primary school, the sisters' arrival in the class was preceded by a letter that "Father Gregory" wrote personally to each one, having it delivered to school. Here it is:

*Dear..... how are you?  
I'm writing to you, without you knowing me, I'll tell you something about myself, but I won't reveal who I am right away, you'll discover me!  
I was born in a far country / not so far from here. I am the ninth child, the youngest in my family. Everyone called me by this nickname "Vico".*

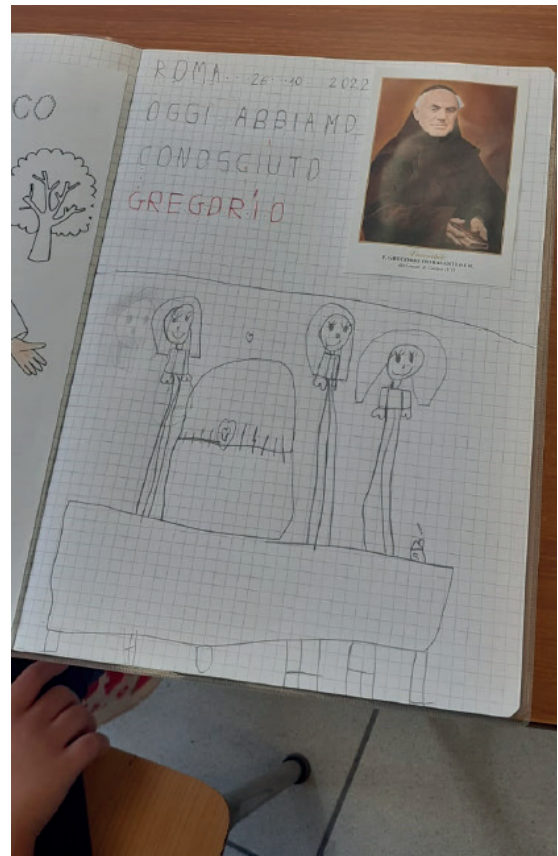
*I received a lot of affection, even though at the age of six, my mother went to Heaven and I cried a lot, but my father, my brothers and sisters were so close to me.*

*I have always liked school; I have always been passionate about music, like spending time outdoors with my friends. I also loved being silent for a few moments and listening attentively to what was moving around me and inside my heart.*

*I have always attended Church and after my mother's death I became even more attached to Mary, the Mother of Jesus and of all of us.*

*I was an altar boy and looked up to my parish priest. I learned a lot from him, even Latin, which then helped me a lot when I grew up.*

*One day a dream blossomed in my heart, a dream that, I believe was given to me by God. And what dream do you have in your heart?*



When the children received this letter, a nice atmosphere of surprise was created which spread from class to class, as they looked for who this Vico could be, interested in them and were eager to know their dreams.

Some children have felt the desire to give an answer to this letter by innocently expressing their simple, open, grateful thoughts and fully available to deepen the theme of the “Dream”.

Then came the time for the meeting with the sisters in their class, to listen to the testimony through which the children finally discovered “Vico” in the person of our Founder Fr. Gregory.

They reflected on his dream, got to know him and had fun to build a puzzle that depicted the image of Fr. Gregory, reproduced on a large sheet made up of bricks on which the children were invited to write the words they most remembered from the story they heard.

They understood that they too had dreams, they identified them, they expressed simply and truthfully.

In the secondary school it all began with the song: “*Until dawn*” by Arisa:

*He was a boy like us  
Who had a dream in his drawer  
He wanted to be a hero  
No costume or mantle*

*He dreamed of touching the clouds  
And to fly with the eagles  
But he could only run  
And keep dreaming*

*It's we, it's just we  
There is no flag that limits us  
Don't turn around, don't stop  
Until dawn*

*Speed and the wind blowing  
Don't turn around, don't stop  
Until dawn...  
Until dawn...*

*And there was a clear sky  
As painted with pastel  
And that boy was a hero  
But without a mask and mantle*

*It was coming down like lightning  
In the mountains with the eagles  
He had an irrepressible heart  
And eyes full of emotion*

*If you look, there is a world of superheroes  
Kids ...of the world around us*

*In their eyes,  
it is today that time stops  
In their dreams,  
that's where everything makes sense*

The song was proposed by a teacher and after listening, reflection and meeting with the kids in their classes followed, where time was given to listen to the song again and further sharing.

The knowledge of Fr. Gregory, in this case, was given through a double interview between the Father's voice-over and one of the sisters present who brought her own testimony of vocational life among the Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.



Finally, we gave all the children and young people the opportunity to formulate a request for a written prayer on a piece of paper to be given to the older sisters who, through prayer, continue the mission begun many years ago by Fr. Gregory, the Foundress and the first sisters.

There were many requests, a reason for joy for the sisters who, in the recitation of the rosary, presented to Our Lady the sufferings of young people, families and their personal needs. We have seen how in Gemona and in Rome, the pupils' requests are centered on their families, especially grandparents and sick people.



The teachers also had the opportunity to participate in a training meeting, through the reflection of some key words taken from the presentation of the life of Fr. Gregory and the history of the Foundation of our Religious Family:

Being a son.... Dream... Dialogue... Unexpected... Journey...

A group work was then proposed, starting from these words, for each of which they were asked to think of the title of a book, a song, a work of art, a film, a video that will be useful for the continuation of the project, which does not end here.

Indeed, there will be other moments, other activities to continue to know the Founder and the Dream that God has placed in his heart, now visible in all the Missions and in our schools.

It was very nice to discover that the pupils and teachers found themselves part of this dream and protagonists of the mission.



*Let us listen to the reflections of the sisters  
who organized and lived the experience*

*This experience also proved to be the realization of a “dream”, that of collaborating with other sisters.*

*The efforts have given way to the joy of being together; the memory of Fr. Gregory has supported and motivated us in comparison with the young people. Thanks to Fr. Gregory, thanks to our Superiors who helped us, thanks to each sister.*



I am grateful to God for the experience he has given us of living in the “St. Mary of the Angels” and “Mary Immacolate” schools to present the person of our Founder Father Gregory on the bicentenary of his birth.

It is an experience built in small steps, the fruit of prayer, dialogue, journey to meet with sisters on mission in different communities and the encouragement and trust of the Superiors and sisters of all the fraternities.

I particularly remember the brief moments of prayer before starting each meeting, the mutual support when, even with joy in my heart, a little tension was felt, a few healthy laughs to defuse the inevitable, small mistakes and oversights and the desire to pass on the beauty of our family. The meetings with children, young people and teachers were positive, we found them listening, having a desire to interact with in amazement.

The desire that we carry within us is to continue to meet among sisters to meet other realities together (for example catechism groups, scout groups, university students, etc.), to bear witness to the gift that has been given to us of having been called to the consecrated life in the F.M.S.C. and to glimpse future shoots together.

“Thanks be to God for this ineffable gift of His!” 2 Cor. 9.15  
 Providence... the first word that expresses my experience that I lived with all the sisters Sr. Miranda, Sr. Francesca Sr. Mara, Sr. Lilibeth, Sr. Marta and Sr. Gabriella.

This wonderful initiative to make Fr. Gregory Fioravanti known to the children, young people and teachers in our schools has allowed me to retrace and remember our history of origin both of our religious family and also of my personal history. Sharing our vocational history gave us the opportunity to get to know each other as well. I am aware that speaking in front of people is very difficult for me but all with the grace of God... “don’t turn back, don’t stop until dawn... There is no flag that limits us ... I am willing to be an instrument together with the sisters who pass on the Grace of God. It has remained strong in my heart in everything we have experienced together from

Gemona, the meeting with the sisters of the motherhouse, of Oasi, of Paesi and in Centocelle, the fraternal exchange of smiles, hugs and words. The meeting of children, teenagers and teachers.

Gratitude... a thanksgiving to God who has called us to walk together, to be witnesses of fraternal communion in diversity. Thanks to our venerable Fr. Gregory, he wanted us be together with this project. A special thanks to you the sisters who have worked so hard to prepare this initiative. An experience that has left not only the beauty of meeting others but above all among us, I am very grateful to feel I am in the family.



The bicentenary of Father Gregoriy's birth was an opportunity to take up a great challenge: to present a character who lived two centuries ago to today's children and young people who apparently have nothing to share with him. Accepting this challenge has made possible another great experience, also not taken for granted: the collaboration of sisters from different provinces for a single project with a true spirit of sharing and fraternity from the original idea, to its elaboration through the sharing of ideas and experiences, up to the realization.

By making the children of our schools in Gemona and Rome protagonists, therefore starting from their experience, their emotions and their dreams, the figure of Father Gregory was presented as someone not far from them. We also think that telling the heroic story of Father Gregory was useful not only for making him known, but also for making the boys feel challenged and challenged to live their lives with an openness of their dreams to God's dream.

The initial effort that in the dialogue we have done, to go deeply into our history and into the life of our founder to understand which aspects could make in the journey for the younger generations, has also allowed us to know and love our history more, the inheritance received from founders and first sisters, our religious family! Together it's possible!

This is a great gift, a rich experience for that we have been busy since last summer. "Together we can" is what prompted us to overcome difficulties, distances, closures... because "together" is in the heart of God!

I keep the experience lived on the occasion of the "Father Gregory Mission" in my heart as a moment of grace, as a precious opportunity to go back to savoring the beauty of the origins of our Congregation.

It is obviously difficult to explain what I experienced, but I would like to do it with more meaningful words and emotions. Adventure... in the sense of throwing myself, of putting myself on the line of thinking, sharing, working in this "idea" of bringing Father Gregory's life into our schools and into our pastoral activities.

This adventure undertaken with other sisters was the beautiful opportunity for a serene and collaborative exchange, in trust and mutual respect, for this reason, another important word for me is **communion**.

Joy and emotion, then, in putting into practice what we have anointed with the Holy Spirit, therefore speaking, being there to the fullest with the students from the youngest to the oldest, and with their respective teachers.

Another word linked to the many people met is **thirst**, understood as the need to find the true source of existence, that source, which offers warmth, and peace, which soothes so many restless hearts weighed down by complicated situations.

Finally, a word that I like about our Congregational history, present in some of my personal events is **unexpected**.... Understood as something that seems to happen without a sense.

Instead with the gaze of faith, that unexpected, you perceive it as the intervention of God in your today; an unexpected event that makes you change your plans, which makes you say ... "now what to do"....

Precisely in the face of fear, loss, un thought paths, ways open up, where the courage to go, to trust in God, inevitably requires; and God always opens up to the new, makes you a new creature, makes your today a time of salvation, a time of hope, a time for superheroes without a mask or cloak, where in their gazes, it is today that time stops and where In their dreams, that's where everything makes sense.

I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart... (Psalm 110, 1) In these days, 5-8 October and 23-26 October, lived together with the other Sisters: Sr Miranda, Sr Francesca, Sr Mara, Sr Marta, Sr Aileen and I went to Gemona, then Sr Gabriela also came to Rome, I felt a strong bond of fraternity, of a sense of family, of collaboration and communion among us.

This experience led me to recognize the work of the Lord that passes through every sister and every person I met both in the communities and in the schools, Santa Maria degli Angeli and Maria Immacolata, where we presented the person of Father Gregory Fioravanti, OFM, our founder. These moments were beautiful because it made us get to know each other even more and made me feel the sense of belonging to a single family despite our diversity. These days lived together led me to appreciate each of the sisters, recognizing in each one the gift of their being and I welcomed in them the gifts that each one has. Certainly, I can say that everything is God's grace and I feel like expressing my gratitude to Him and to the sisters who have given me this opportunity to live these days with joy, spontaneity and fraternal affection.



The experience of collaborating with sisters from different communities was unforgettable, even more so when the main mission was to speak about our congregation. One of the topics of the week was talking about dreams.

When we listened to young people and children talk about their dreams, two things happened to me: the first was to contemplate life with optimism, when I listen to children and young people talk about the future, I have the hope that their generation will not remain inert, on the contrary, they will follow their dreams as in all history. The second impression was associated with the life of our Congregation, as it happens in the life of Father Gregory, perhaps God continues to act in the life of His little ones. The image of their happy faces still remains fresh in my memory, especially when we told them that they are part of our founder's dream, therefore of God's dream.

In reality, these things may seem very simple, but in the simplicity of things God acts in a wonderful way.

## PILGRIMAGE TO ST. AGNESE (GEMONA)

*To remember the presence of the sisters in Gemona and their missions*

The information leaflet of the Parish of Gemona communicates that, “after a few years of absence due to the covid, today, 11 September 2022, the families of Gemona will gather for Holy Mass at 11.00 in the church of St. Agnese, where the Alpini will then prepare the pasta and everyone is invited to participate in this initiative”.

### CHURCH OF ST. AGNESE

#### From the Historical Memories of Father Gregory

*Monastery of St. Agnese located on a hill at the foot of the mountain outside Gemona, and was of the Order of the Cistercians, who depended on the Patriarch of Aquileja. But in them, it seems, the former observance was no longer in its vigor; and the Patriarch of Aquileja Raimondo of Torre, wanting to reform them, it seems that in the year 1277 he gave them the Rule of St. Clare, which some embraced, becoming Poor Clares... These, in departing from St. Agnes, separating themselves from the others, brought with them their dowry and other share of the property, they founded the Monastery and Church of the Cella, which took the name of Monastery of St. Chiara della Cella from the Rule they professed..*

#### THE NARRATION OF TWO PARTICIPATING SISTERS

It is a beautiful sunny day, the temperature is excellent and even two sisters from the motherhouse wish to participate... Some distance of the way by car and the rest is done on foot together with the people who have set out on the road. Every now and then, we stop to contemplate the beautiful panorama of Gemona.

After an hour's walk, we come to the 'church of Sant'Agnese', a place that reminds us of the novitiate; because we have all been there to some extent... it was the Sunday afternoon walk of the postulants and novices.



After the Holy Mass celebrated by the parish priest Mons. Valentino, the good Alpine troops lit the fire to cook the pasta and prepared the tables.

Heartfelt thanks to all for this sensitivity!

With joy, the sister's fmsc as in a large family we shared pasta seasoned with an excellent meat sauce.

The group of volunteers prepared a rich 'lottery' and the profits were donated to our missions.

Some of the participants gratefully recall that many of our sisters who have been present in the parish of Gemona in pastoral care, catechesis and also in missionary animation.

## THE MIRACLES OF HOPE

Paese (Treviso) 28 October 2022, beautiful and lively evening, at the end of the missionary month, also this year “Missione Tau Onlus”, in the persons of Sr. Chiarfrancesca and Lino Bordignon with the presence of other members. We joyfully accepted the invitation of Rino Franceschi, the animator of the Missionary Group of Paese, to participate in the final meeting of the missionary month, also with the presentation of a solidarity project in support of the emergencies of the hospital at Maigaro (R.C.A.).

**La MISSIONE della PACE**  
 incontro conclusivo dell'Ottobre Missionario  
**venerdì 28 ottobre 2022 - ore 20.30**  
 Paese - sala polivalente parrocchiale  
 in collaborazione con la Missione Tau Onlus delle Suore Francescane M.S.C.

presentazione del libro:  
**"Donna dei Fiori"**  
 - i fiori dalle bombe -  
 con l'autrice-giornalista  
 Laura Simeoni

La protagonista - è una storia vera -  
 è una donna che recupera le mine vuote  
 in zona di guerra riempiendole di terra,  
 fiori e speranza.  
 Perché occorre "seminare la pace"!

Video e testimonianza sul progetto  
 proposto dalla Missione TAU Onlus a favore  
 dell'Ospedale di Maigaro, in Centrafrica,  
 per la sostituzione delle batterie  
 di accumulo dell'impianto fotovoltaico.

Intermezzi musicali con arpa e oboe  
 a cura della Scuola Clara Schuman -  
 Musica e Cultura aps di Castagnole

Tutte le offerte raccolte saranno devolute  
 per il progetto nell'Ospedale di Maigaro - RCA  
**ingresso libero**

The slogan of the evening, “The miracles of Hope”, highlighted the strength of hope against the rampant wars, hatred, violence and destruction. Strength expressed in significant and courageous gestures of love, peacefully “shouted” in many ways.

Such that of an elderly Palestinian woman busy filling with earth and planting flowers in grenade shells, succeeding, with her tenacity, in changing the heart of a soldier; or the “Sowers of Peace” of Padua who embellish the most degraded places of the city, aware that even beauty and harmony open hearts to love.

Even the boys of the middle school of the village have created an eloquent poster with the inscription: “Peace is in our hands”, yes, because these young people always know how to see the glass half-full and do not resign themselves to violence.

Eloquent is the experience of the schools of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem which welcome Christian and Muslim students together, because they are children of God and brothers of the same race.

All this was presented with engaging enthusiasm by the journalist Laura Simeoni who offered extensive explanations on her book “Woman of Flowers”, written in three languages (Italian, Arabic and English).



The parish priest presents the event

But let us now hear what our talented journalist, Mariano Berti, transmitted to us on this evening in the Diocesan Weekly of Treviso “La Vita del Popolo” of last November 6: “... *The evening, presented by Melissa Pulin of Postioma, was organized by the Group parish missionary, in collaboration with the Missione Tau Onlus of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, who are on the front line alongside the least, among the African forests and savannahs.*



*The conference, enlivened by the harps and oboe of three young musicians from the Clara Shuman school in Castagnole, in fact, aimed to highlight the Franciscan missions and raise funds for the purchase of the accumulators for the photovoltaic system, indispensable for operation theatre of the Maigaro hospital in the Central African Republic. The testimony of two sisters was very significant, Sister Chiarfrancesca of Missione Tau Onlus and Sister Nayomi, an Indian religious nurse-midwife who works in the aforementioned mission, who, bearing witness to her vocation, said she was enthusiastic about having responded to the call to serve God in humbler and needier brothers.*

*These are the Peacemakers of the Beatitudes of the Gospel. After the greeting of the parish priest and the presentation of the book, Lino Bordignon screened a video-documentary on the activity of the mission and of the Maigaro hospital.*



*The speaker of the video was the mission manager herself. She highlighted the importance of such a structure, a continuous miracle in the midst of indifference and nothingness, to give hope - the one that Pope Francis never tires of spreading - and which is sustained. Thanks to the Providence that works in daily life through so many people with an open heart.”*

Together we thank the Good Lord for all the good and beautiful works which we can still sow to be true witnesses of Peace in our war torn and confused world. A renewed “thank you” to all who collaborated for the success of this meeting lived in the sign of peace and solidarity.

**Let us praise and thank the Lord always!**

**Peekskill- US**

In this season of Thanksgiving, we are grateful to God for the blessings and challenges of another year; they help us to realize all the gifts God sends us.

We thank God for family – our community family, our natural family and our benefactor family of which you have been such a vibrant part.

We thank God for our health – even though here in Peekskill some of us have struggled with the covid virus this last month.

We have been hit by its touch, but thank God for letting that be a gentle touch compared to so many in our world. We thank God for so many blessings that we fail to notice or appreciate.

Most of all, we are thankful for a loving God, with us every day of our lives. This year saw a very prosperous Tag Sale put together by our Lay Associates.

We have been so blessed to have such loyal and loving benefactors.

All the benefactors are prayed for every day by the Sisters, grateful for the loving remembrances of what the Sisters have meant in their lives.

We are happy to receive letters and notes of appreciation from so many of our benefactors. They are truly one of the blessings we never forget to thank God for.

*Sister Anne James Guerin*



***Testimonies of some of the lay associates***

I feel truly blessed to have been a Lay Associate of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart for a little over 16 years.

I was looking for a volunteer opportunity when I was getting ready to retire from my full-time work when two of the Sisters visited my parish to talk about the Franciscan Lay Associates. My husband and I went to visit and never left! I felt it was a place I was meant to be. We joined the group and found that working and praying with the Sisters and other Lay Associates have brought us many blessings. My husband, who was raised Lutheran but usually attended church with me, decided four years ago to become a Catholic.

I was taught by the Franciscan Sisters at Assumption School and have always been religious. But I think I kept my faith pretty much to myself, just because I was never a very outgoing person. Since becoming a Lay Associate I have developed the desire to share my faith with others. Working as one of the Lay Associate coordinators, I have made many friendships. People often reach out to me to ask for prayers from the Sisters and Lay Associates for themselves or their loved ones. I'm comforted to know that our joint prayers with the Sisters are pleasing to God. I am also blessed to receive an occasional phone call from one of our Lay Associates who may just need someone to talk to, and I feel I gain as much comfort as I'm able to give just by being there to talk to them..

We hold several fundraisers for the Sisters each year. These events, while a lot of work, are very enjoyable. Working together makes the work fun, and it's always a pleasure to see how happy members of the community are to attend and be with the Sisters at Mt. St. Francis. Again, I feel I was called to be a Franciscan Lay Associate. It's where I was meant to be

*Grazia Grexa, (Lay Associate Coordinator)*

I have been a Lay Associate of the Sisters for about 10 years. I am very grateful, thankful and blessed to know the Sisters. I felt the love all around me from the first time I walked into the convent. Sisters have become mentors to me. They are strong, caring. You always know you are in the right place when you are with them. I am truly grateful seeing how they accept illness and death so gracefully. I am able to witness the way the sisters send their sisters home to God, kind loving so no one is left alone and uncared for. It was the most beautiful act of kindness and compassion I have ever witnessed. This convent has become my second home. I am truly grateful for the Franciscan Sisters in my life!

*Gloria Giunta.*

*When my neighbor Theresa told me she was a lay associate with the Franciscan Sisters and asked me if I would be interested in attending a meeting with her at Mount Saint Francis in Peekskill to see if I would be interested in joining, I wasn't quite sure what to say.*

*Having a family at home and working two jobs, I wasn't sure if I wanted to add anything else to my schedule. I asked her where this church was and what did lay associates do?*

*After a brief description of who the FMSC were and what part lay associates played, it peaked my curiosity (since I wasn't even aware they existed) and I said sure I'll go. That was approximately ten years ago.*

*Now, we all think we know where we are going in life, but how many of us take into account the effects people in our lives truly have on us. Since the day I walked through the doors of Mount Saint Francis, I knew that this was a special place, that I would be affected by who and what lies within these walls and that I would want to be a part of it.*

*As you walk through the halls and pray in the chapel, you can feel the quietness, calm and peacefulness I relish. The Sisters work hard to maintain this atmosphere and I feel we are truly blessed that they continue to accomplish this. And I know I am not alone, for many others have expressed this sentiment to me.*

*Through the years, I have developed close relationships with some of the Sisters who have left permanent impressions on me that have only enhanced my life, both spiritual and secular and I will never forget them! Yes, we have spiritual lectures, see movies, have discussions, share the holidays and feast days. But I wonder if the Sisters at Mount Saint Francis are aware of just how much they inspire us by their way of life and their example set before us. I hope they do!*



*Whether it be covering switchboard, planning and working fundraisers, gardening, driving a Sister to an appointment, helping in the thrift shop, attending our monthly Province Days together with our Sisters or enjoying a meal together, I am proud to be a Lay Associate of the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart.*

*Maria Carlucci*

In September 2009, my husband and I joined the Lay Associates. Since then we have made so many friends and acquaintances amongst the Sisters and the other members.

We meet monthly at the convent, participate at Mass, and have the opportunity to go to Confession. Spiritual talks follow in the afternoon which help us to discern and do God's will in the Franciscan way. This is followed by a meeting to enable the Lay Associates to brainstorm and plan fundraisers to support the Sisters. We also collect food for the local food pantry and collect coins for the missions. Most importantly the Sisters and their intentions are always in our prayers.

Yours In Faith.



*Vickie e Ray Jagelski*



I am so thankful that I found the opportunity to join the Lay Association of the Franciscan Sisters. It is a wonderful group of men and women who care for the Sisters as much as I do! This group is so diverse and when together we can accomplish so many amazing things for the Sisters and I love being a part of that!

To be able to spend time with the Sisters: in prayer, volunteering to cover the phone, doing fund raising, it fills my heart with such joy and peace to do so. Even just to stop by and have a chat makes me smile. They are another part of my family that I am so vey grateful to have!

*Linda Morrisons*

## YOUNG MISSIONARIES BEARERS OF PEACE AND HOPE!!!

Tavannes, a small village located at 760 m. above sea level in the Swiss Jura massif where a Catholic community, in the minority, is increasingly faced with the challenges of propagation of various evangelical-sect churches and at the same time de-Christianization. It is here that the fraternity of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart has been operating for about 60 years.

It is difficult for us to organize and experience the children's day of prayer for peace, as Pope Francis had requested, but our activities and the prayers of the children of the choir are always centered on the urgency of peace and reconciliation. In the spirit of peace announced by the angels at Christmas, we have made concrete gestures aimed, in particular, at the lonely people of the village.

Joyful songs of praise resounded in the streets of Tavannes during Advent.



They are the children of the choir, dressed as the Magi, who bring the good news of Christmas, bless families and raise funds for projects to help children. For their joy, the songs and the great enthusiasm are true missionaries of the Good News and announce Peace. They participate in the "Singers of the Star" action coordinated by the Mission Switzerland.

The Singers of the Star are a solidarity action proposed to children during the Christmas and Epiphany periods. Like the Magi, as Christmas approaches, the Star Singers proclaim this good news of the birth of Jesus and invite people for sharing.

A tradition that dates back to the Middle Ages, this activity takes place in many countries and on all continents, under the support of Missione-Bambini.

In the Middle Ages, children from poor families went from door to door asking for some money, which they brought to their families to improve ordinary life.





oday, the Star singers do the same thing, but the money they raise goes to children around the world. This tradition sensitizes the youngest to the necessary solidarity with children from other regions of the world.

With this spirit of sharing, singing we go from house to house among lonely people; they await this moment with impatience and joy, they open wide the doors of their homes, they participate with empathy in the songs and wishes of peace and joy, they welcome with respect the blessing that the children bring them. They are very beautiful moments of sharing between children and elderly people; the adults are excited, the children amazed and enthusiastic. When we leave, the lonely people greet us with great gratitude and wave at us from the window. Sr. Beniamina opens the small group of singers, while Sr. Paolina, like a “shepherd”, follows and protects.



And how not to announce peace and joy to all those who we meet? And passing in front of a garage, how not to stop and enter singing? Certainly, the owner, surprised and amazed at what is happening, does not understand, but the presence of the sisters reassures him.

Then the children sing with greater enthusiasm, and explain the project, wishing the people in the warehouse happy Christmas holidays and a new and holy New Year. Who would have imagined that the workers could slow down their work, for a few minutes rejoice with us, and sing the joy of the Good News? The happiness of both is inexpressible.

When we return to school after the Christmas holidays, we will continue our evangelization, we will bring peace and joy to three Rest Homes in the valley.

A unique experience: bringing joy and human warmth to all these people!

**We enter the church to learn to love God  
and we leave the church to love our neighbor**



**Albania:  
the bell of the  
rebuilt church  
in the village  
of Curraj te Eperm  
rings again**

Our sisters Sr Vangie, Sr Lirie and Sr Dila share the great joy for the re-constructed church of Curraj Eper whose celebration they prepared and animated.

On August 6, during the Holy Mass presided over by the Bishop of Sappa, Monsignor Simon Kulli, concelebrated with various priests, in the presence of many faithful.

They came from Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and the diaspora, also were present the civil authorities of the various governments. The Church in the name of St. Anthony destroyed by the communist regime and now rebuilt, has been blessed and the bells have begun to make their voices heard again calling to praise the Lord and always reminding us that: “We enter the church to love God and we leave the church to love our neighbor”.

The church of St. Antony di Curraj stands in the most isolated village of the Albanian Alps, one of the many villages entrusted to the care of our sisters of the Dushaj Mission.

Until a few years ago, it had no access road, but only sometimes inaccessible paths, on steep and tiring rocks.

Our first missionaries tell of having walked for eight hours to be able to reach the faithful in that area, but now thanks to the opening of the road can be reached by car in two and a half hours.



The church has always been looked after by the villagers even when the fury of the atheist regime had destroyed or transformed all the places of worship.

It stands in front of the tower where the inhabitants offered shelter and guarded those they had killed, with the hope that they would find a way to reconcile.



However, after two weeks, if an agreement for reconciliation could not be found, the inhabitants themselves begged the killer to leave.

Today those same inhabitants with the help of emigrants and other donors have rebuilt and embellished their church so that it can once again become a place of fraternal meetings, reconciliation and prayer to raise praises to the Almighty God, our Father.

Curraj Eper has always been linked to her church and has always stood out for having preserved the values of national identity, freedom of expression, fraternity and faith.

The event celebrated on August 6 was not only a celebration of the village but also by the whole area of Nikaj and Mertur, of Gjakova (Kosovo) of Dukagjin because the resurrected church of St. Anthony, which rises in the lap of the Albanian Alps, is testimony of fraternity and ancient historical and cultural values of the nation.

Therefore, we can say that the reconstruction of this church is a step forward, towards the redevelopment of the area.

The inhabitants have sworn not to sell their land and houses but to always keep their doors open to all those who pass through the village to enjoy the beauty of nature and the joy of meeting each other.

In recent years, many tourists have passed, especially from the Czech Republic and they were the first initiators of the reconstruction of the church.



## SMALL MUSTARD SEED PROFESSIONAL TECHNICAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

Written history and that which is lived in everyday life, are scattered with investitures, sumptuous or simple ceremonies, in which one takes possession of a task or a new dignity.

Attention is focused today on the investiture, which symbolizes the beginning of professional practices, of a group of young people in the last year of studies in a technical professional high school in Chile. The Congregation of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, faithful to the inspiration of its charism and the mission, carried out in the Church, considers the school as a privileged place for evangelization.

The “Santa Rosa” Vocational Technical High School is an educational institution for women, officially recognized by the Diocese of Rancagua as an Institution of Catholic Education. This high school is located in the urban area of the Libertador General Bernardo O Higgins Region, in the municipality of Rancagua.

The investiture in this high school acquires a particular tone in the educational rainbow, because in addition to training young professionals in the professional technical area with solid knowledge, it shapes Christian-Franciscan values in them, thus feeding all the dimensions of their beings, in the personal, work and social sphere.



These young people belong to a lower middle social status, so officially taking on professional practices, in the specialty of nurses and in administration, is a challenge to personal improvement, to promote continuous specialization as a strategy to overcome adverse realities that have a positive impact on the paths and life projects of the students.

Since this institution has Christ as its foundation, the sending to professional practice takes place in the solemn context of the celebration of the Holy Mass, in which the sisters, teachers, high school staff, representatives of institutions and parents participate. Furthermore, this ceremony takes place on the occasion of the liturgical celebration in Latin America of Santa Rosa de Lima, patroness of this high school, invoked to accompany and guide each of the students in the technical professional journey, and in this way, they are attentive to the presence of God in their life and are a reflection of His goodness to those they are called to serve.

The credentials of both degrees were blessed in the Holy Mass and the headmistress of the high school, Sister Claudia Muñoz Lehue, hands them over to the fourth grade students wearing the uniform of their specialization.



The young women, with joy and satisfaction, receive their identification credentials which symbolize the beginning of their professional practices, in an attitude of service and responsibility, accompanied, with hope and love, by their parents.

As the culmination of this investiture, the young women make their promise, committing themselves to carry out a quality work, considering everything that has been learned and satisfying the requirements that the School has established for the efficient carrying out of this stage.

*“I ... student of the specialty of ... I am here in front of God and those present, wearing the uniform of the specific course that identifies me as a student of the Technical Professional Secondary School Santa Rosa and which represents the beginning of a new stage in my professional training process. I promise to wear this uniform with respect, living Franciscan values, carrying out my task professionally, learning from the experience of others and putting all my learning at the service of others.*

*In every step I take in this experience, that enriches my knowledge and my skills, I will be guided by the humility, responsibility and fraternity that characterize our community.*

*I ask St. Francis of Assisi and Santa Rosa of Lima to help me follow the right path and, by their example, teach me to love and serve others with professionalism and generosity.”*

The commitment of the educational institution has been, since its foundation, to educate women in Christian and Franciscan values, to train them in an integral way, with skills and techniques that lead them to enter the world of work, putting everyone at the service of society. their skills, their personal and professional talents.



With the psalmist, we acclaim:  
*Praise the Name of the Lord,  
all you young people!*

## SCIENCE AT THE SERVICE OF EDUCATION AND FAITH

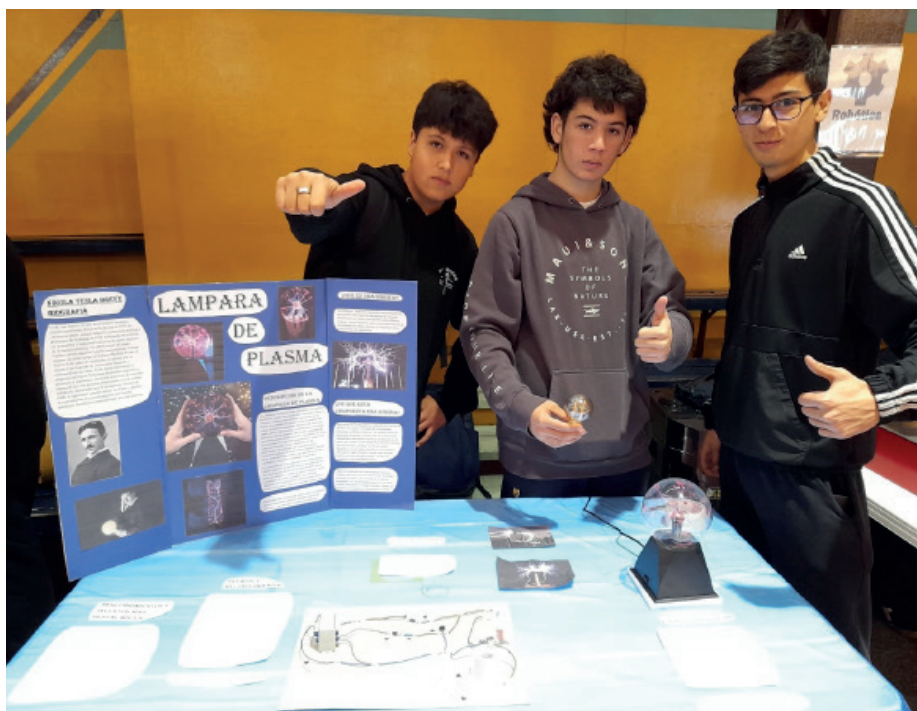
When the school year draws to an end in Chile, when the spring sun becomes more ardent and forces weaken due to accumulated fatigue, the educational community offers the annual scientific exhibition, aware that science and technology transform the way to live and see the world, changes that have been dizzying since the mid-twentieth century.

That is why scientific and technological literacy becomes a priority for educational communities.

A scientific exhibition is an educational space in which children and youth have the opportunity to share with others, promote scientific culture and the appropriation of scientific knowledge, make the school community aware of the projects and/or discoveries developed in the activities school and/or extracurricular.

Every year, students have the opportunity to present a series of scientific experiments studied and carried out by themselves, to show in a didactic and engaging way different physical, chemical and biological phenomena related to various aspects, and which can be seen in daily life.

While the pupils are the protagonists, they require the patient, wise and fraternal guidance of the teachers who supervise them during the process which ends with the exhibition to the whole educational community.



The activity fits into the spirit of St. Francis and presents itself as an example of fraternity; a distinctive sign of a Franciscan educational community, supported by the Congregation of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, is the “Santa Maria de los Angeles” College, in Santiago del Chile.

This fraternity is particularly nurtured by the responsibility of older students, in the preparation of experiments, interactive and didactic experiences for their younger peers, thus involving them from an early age in the world of science.

In these simple and modest practices, shine the words of the eminent scientist Jacques Cousteau” *«After all, what is a scientist then? He is a curious man looking through a keyhole, the keyhole of nature, trying to know what is going on»*.

In this way, the pupils experience firsthand that science begins every day when curiosity drives us to want to know

more, to expand our horizons and to discover in all of creation and in all that man is capable of being and realize through the potential that God has given him.

Precisely the mighty hand of God that directs everything towards the fullness of the human being until he reaches eternal glory in immortal life.

Franciscan fraternity is concretely seen in the large hall which is the courtyard of the college, in the personal approach, in good relationships, in cordiality, in camaraderie, in valuing others, in respect and recognition of differences, the richness of the human being, created by God, unique and unrepeatable. Although the school community, at all levels, is responsible for the education and training of the pupils, the burden of organizing and carrying out the exhibition falls on the teachers who are responsible for it. Despite the inherent difficulties of the event, with so many participants, experiments to be developed and evaluations to be recorded, they generate a breeze of fresh air for the routines of students and professors, a bridge that brings everyday life closer to a subject, often distant due to its complexity, such as physics, mathematics, biology, chemistry and natural sciences.

It is demonstrated, through this simple exhibition, simple for the material resources available, that this area of knowledge can be interesting and practical, that the student is able to engage in an exceptional

and attractive way, that the senses can more easily and the world of knowledge is significant, according to the ideals of the Franciscan community and fraternity, that with Christ and in Christ can build a fraternal world of harmony, of goodness, which has its fullness in Heaven.



## A new initiative

*“The true initiative, the true activity comes from God,.. we are only inserted ourselves into the Divine initiative, with Him in Him ... become evangelizers....”*(EG112)

The “Holy Trinity” community, Thekkalipatnam in Andhra Pradesh in the province Holy Family India involves in the mission of evangelization through direct pastoral and educational activities in the region since 1998.

Thekkalipatnam is in the diocese of Srikakulam in the northeastern part of Andhra Pradesh.

It is indeed a poor region surrounded by many villages where the people are mostly agricultural laborers. Some work in the cashew nut factories on daily wage basis and make their living possible. Many young girls discontinued their studies and work in the paddy fields or in the cashew nut factories. These works are seasonal since cultivation is depending on the rains and it is very scarce in the region. Thanks to the Lord, our long years of pastoral and educational services have brought an enormous change in the life and faith of the people of the place though they are of different religions.



We always make new initiatives to concentrate on the formation of the girls to give them life skills to build up their good future.

With this intention, we have started a new initiative, tailoring classes to give training in cutting, tailoring and embroidery works to the girls and the women who are interested.



We appreciate Sr. Vijaya Kurma, who with her innate talent and preparation in the field, found a creative way to keep the girls closer and train them with much enthusiasm.



They make church articles like vestments, altar linens, and altar laces, dress for the altar boys etc, as the parish priests of the diocese make the order.

The articles they made are very beautiful and according to the taste of the people of the place. Sr. Vijaya is also very good in stitching dress of all types, ladies handbags, purses and pouches for the schoolchildren.

It is a six months training program and at the end of the course, we will gift the stitching machine to them so that they can stitch and make their living when they do not have other works. Besides getting a training in a craft they also get a certain religious formation with our witness of life.

They are people of different religions but we treat them equally with the same concern. Our classes always we begin and end with a prayer, which they appreciate and take part in. At times they take the freedom to share their problems, seeking advices.

“The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus” and no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord. (EG1).

We try to share this joy and make them encounter Jesus. We express our sincere thanks to Sr. Paola our superior general whose encouragement, contribution and blessings that helped us to begin the activities.

We involve in the pastoral works in the villages, visiting the families, preparing for the sacraments teaching catechism etc.

We also dedicate in giving tuition classes to the poor children in the village who are weak in studies.



In our own small ways, we try to give Jesus to the people, who never knew Him, believing firmly that “Whenever we take a small step towards Jesus, we realize that He is already there waiting for us with open arms”. (EG3)

*The sisters of the community  
“Holy Trinity”.  
Thekkalipatnam, India*

## **“Laudato sii mi Signore”** **A life Witness ....from St. Mary of the Angels - Assisi**

I do not find a better way to start the sharing of my experience in “St. Mary of the Angels” Assisi, if not with the words of Father Gregory “Marvelous are the ways of the Lord and no one has the right to ask why in this way not otherwise....”

Yes, such are the graceful opportunities that I receive by being in a community close to the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels’ Assisi. I am extremely happy to share my personal experience by being part of this community, in the atmosphere where St. Francis lived and died. Indeed, immense is the spiritual nourishment we receive by sharing the various liturgical moments along with the friars in the basilica.

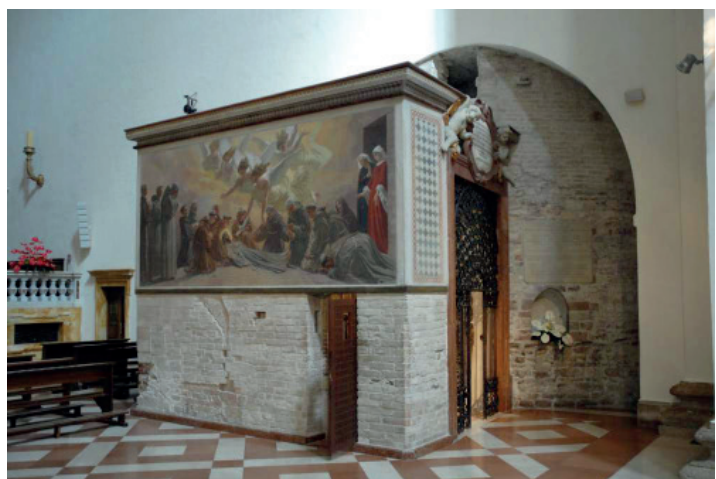
Daily we have the solemn morning prayers and the Holy Eucharist in the Basilica. The intense liturgical moments, the solemnities of the Church and of the Franciscan calendar are celebrated with great devotion and enthusiasm.

Novenas, Triduoms and other special occasions are well animated with beautiful singing and very inspiring reflections often from resourceful persons that in fact give us much to make an effective spiritual journey in the ways of our ‘poverello, St. Francis. Such moments are not only opening our minds with more knowledge, but also profoundly touching our hearts, inviting us to examine and renew our commitment as a Franciscan sister.

Besides receiving these spiritual benefits, I am also happy to share the mission in the basilica along with the friars, the mission of guiding the pilgrims. They assigned days for us sisters as guides to the pilgrims, whom St. Francis attracts and bring to the bosom of St. Mary of the Angels and then She leads them to Jesus. The pilgrims come in groups, single families, or single persons (there are also visitors, who are interested of arts etc.). However, I see in them an intense desire to know the experience of St. Francis who lived in St. Mary of the Angels. I keep myself available and ready for those need explanation on the events in the life of St. Francis, his attachment to this particular place where he began his mission and ended his life as a “poverello”. It is amazing to see them listening to the life of St. Francis and his great desire to take everyone to heaven through the pardon of Assisi. I also observe their thoughtful faces and curious questions deeply desiring to make a change of life. Some even turn to the confessionals decisively.

The visits are not always crowded but we can see enormous crowds close to the feasts of the “Pardon of Assisi”, the feast of St. Francis and during holidays. Just let me share an amazing event, the day before the celebration of St. Francis Transitus. About 10,30 am, there came a flow of people in the basilica, they moved in a silent orderly queue of the persons four on the row, walked directly towards the Porziuncula.

While reaching to the little chapel, they remained in deep silence, praying with much devotion. Then they moved to the chapel of the Transitus, lit candles and quietly moved away. I was indeed much impressed by the attitude of the people; their patient waiting for long hours in silence and deep prayer.



*Chapel of the Transitus of Saint Francis*

It really evidenced how deeply St. Francis could influence their lives... Among such a devote crowd came from far and near attentively listened to the guides accompanied them. I could hear them speaking with conviction and faith which develop in them love for St. Francis, surely trusting in his help and blessings.

Another occasion a family; parents and three children, practicing Cristian life made the visit. The father shared that he felt as he got a special call to live faithfully with his spouse and children. Then started a pilgrimage to Assisi to know better, the spirit of St. Francis and pray for the graces and blessings to start along with other families walking together to be better and meaningful in their life as witnessing Christians. I was very much taken up by their simple sharing of the faith and the desire to live an authentic Christian life.

A young couple shared that they came to pray and seek help to St. Francis, because their married life was at the brim of separation. I was very much moved by this sharing, the interior conflict they live and their desire to make the right discernment. I do not know how it ended up, but i earnestly prayed for them for the divine light.

Another occasion a mother shared in her deep sorrow about her drug-addicted children asked for prayers and seeking help from the Lord.

There are many more stories which I directly came across, where people came with a longing for God, attracted by the life and spirit of St. Francis.

It is very evident that whoever comes to this basilica do not return the same. My heart gratefully sing "Laudato Si" to the Almighty.

I also have my turn of days to make the Eucharistic adoration in the perpetual adoration chapel.

In the quiet of this place, we present especially the people whom we meet here with their various needs seeking for some consolation in their brokenness.



We pray for the various needs of the Church, and my Congregation, for the peace in the world, for families, for the sick and elderly, for youth and children.

I am grateful to the Lord who granted me opportunities to experience my life amidst the poor and people of many religions in my mission in India where I had been for long years.

Now the Lord in His abundant love placed me in an atmosphere filled with the breath of our dear Father Francis whose life was just nothing but a music of love to the Most High.

I thank my superiors who offered me this mission with great concern.

I am grateful for the humble ways through which I witness and share this love with others.

*Sr. Maddalena Moro  
St. Mary of the Angels- Assisi*

## From Mission Tau Onlus - Asisium

*A heart that dwells in God knows how to give*

The new year of missionary activity of the Tau Onlus officially began on Wednesday 19 October (although during the summer the work continued in different forms).

For the occasion, a Holy Mass was celebrated in the church of the Institute Asisium presided over by Father Cristian Prestianni, the new parish priest of the nearby parish of St. Philip the Apostle.

Friends, benefactors and collaborators of the Missione Tau Onlus were present at the Mass as well as Sister Paola, Sister Rose, Sister Firmina and the choir of young sisters who animated the Holy Mass. Father Cristian also noted, most of those present are parents of students or former students of the Institute Asisium, (the good homemade bread) who collaborate directly within the Missione Tau Onlus. They involve in the Food Bank and in the fundraising activities that are carried out inside the “little house” of the Onlus with various initiatives, including the Christmas market and the sale of chocolate eggs at Easter.



Father reminded us at the beginning of his brief homily, emphasizing the passage from the day's liturgy “you will joyfully draw water from the springs of salvation”.

He said, Christian works, like everything that every Christian experiences in his or her daily life, spring out from what they feed and live on the grace that comes from the only source that never runs out: Christ himself.

We cannot give anything except what we have received first, and this is the poverty inherent in our being, we are above all children, in need of everything.

For this brothers, for this responsibly committed to making our small talents and energies and our time available to others.



**preparing the Christmas market**



**Spiritual meeting with the vicar parish priest**

Activities and works are nothing and could not last over time without an adequate purpose. An adequate meaning that does not end with doing good or satisfying some material need of charity to those close to us or more distant, such as those in the Missions that our sisters manage in different continents.

Celebrating this Holy Mass together was a simple gesture to affirm that the priority of the life of every Christian, and thus of every association, which in the name of Christ seeks to open itself to the needs that surround, it is above all Prayer, that is, the relationship with Him .

We hope that the joy that arises from gratuitousness, that is, from the taste for the Good, the True and the Beautiful in oneself, can infect other adults and even the older children in the school, because good expands the heart above all of those who give and are a possibility offered to all.



*Flavio Dessy  
Gabriella Salvatori*



**Sr. Francescagnese Pittino  
of the Divine Lamb**

*Born in Buia (Udine)  
on 23 November 1927  
Died in Rome  
on 30 July 2022*

Difficult to compose the portrait of a loved one who has passed away. Usually there is a risk of exceeding the eulogy or being left speechless by grief. We want to say a few essential things to fix the memory of our dear sister who certainly left a profound mark on each one personal and in community.

Sr. Francescagnese, Faustina Pittino, was born in Buia (Udine) on 23 November 1927 to her father Aristide and mother Eleonora.

The first of 5 children, at the age of 18, well aware of her

response to God, she crossed the threshold of the Convent of Santa Maria degli Angeli of the Mother House in Gemona, to be admitted to the pre-novitiate (1949). After a year, she was already a novice and immediately after her temporary profession in 1951, she was asked for the missionary obedience to go to the nascent congregational settlement of the General Curia of Rome in Piazza Pitagora. Here she completes her studies to become a primary school teacher. In three years of preparation as a teacher, the foundations of a complete educator are laid. It was not sufficient educating the mind of the students with letters and mathematics, but need to deal a lot with the education of the heart and sensitivity through music and religion. Indeed it was a course over time for her and required a lot of sacrifice. However, it is a special and a precious service to the community.

Centocelle, Piazza Pitagora, Colonnata: 46 years of service to the formation of children with their families, while the care of the animation of the liturgy was relentless, through the

teaching and accompaniment of singing. It can be said that in the Provincial house they still feel indebted to her, that they learned so much from her!

Of an apparently severe personality, in reality she knew how to let herself be softened in difficult situations, by the weakness of another person.

For those who have experienced her as superior, they have seen in her intelligence in making choices, at times a stern reminder, but also the rare ability to retrace her steps and apologize when necessary, qualities that many have appreciated!

We leave the rest to the personal experience and knowledge of each one.

Each sister carries with herself the precious treasure stock in the memories.

She spent the last few years in the community of Viale Saffi, first as superior, then retired from activity, serene and patient in suffering from illness.

The Lord called her to Himself after a few days in the hospital on July 30, 2022.

Thank you Sr. Francescagnese for being there and for continuing to be there!!



**Sr. Julie Marie Kennedy  
of the Most Holy Rosary**

*Born in Castlegregory, Kerry  
Ireland  
on 23 July 1927  
Died in Peekskill  
on 04 September 2022*

Sr. Julia Marie, FMSC (Sheila Kennedy) was born to Thomas and Julia Kennedy in Castlegregory, Kerry, Ireland. John and Michael were her older brothers, and Seamus was the last of the Kennedy siblings. When she was 15 her family moved to a dairy farm where she worked milking cows and making butter. She also took care of the baby chicks and did the cooking for the family. In 1949 Sheila came to Manhasset, NY for a three-month visit. It was here that her aunt, Mrs. Rapp, introduced her to Sr. Ellen Joseph, who encouraged her to go to Peekskill and meet Mother Roberta. She gave her a Novena to pray, but Sheila had no intentions of entering a convent. A priest directed her to religious life, and “the rest is history”! She remained in New York and entered the Peekskill Franciscan Sisters in 1957.

Sister was assigned to the Philadelphia schools: St. Rita’s, Holy Rosary, St. Paul’s, and St Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, served on the staff of Mt. St. Francis and then taught at St. Columbanus in Cortlandt Manor, Sacred Heart School and St. Stephen of Hungary School in New York City, and St. Bartholomew School in Elmhurst, NY. In 2006 she worked at Villa St. Francis in Peekskill and retired to the Sisters’ Infirmary in 2013.

Sister Julia had a great Irish sense of humor, loved a good party, and was known for her famous quoting of “To be or not to be!” She enjoyed knitting, sports, playing cards and Bingo, adult coloring, and her “pink” ice cream. She often shared her memories of her participation on the game show Family Flied.

She had a great devotion to the Rosary and especially to the Blessed Mother (The Queen of Ireland). In her autobiography she ended her life story with: “To be a Franciscan is one of my greatest joys. Keep Jesus in your heart daily.” We are consoled in the knowledge that she is now fully present to Jesus and interceding for us in his presence.



**Sr. Bernardette Skorti  
of the Apparition  
of Our Lady of Lourdes**

*Born in Kormakiti (Cyprus)  
on 16 July 1939  
Died in Limassol  
on 09 September 2022*

Sr Bernadette Skorti was born on 16.07.1939 in Kormakiti, one of the villages of the Maronite Archdiocese of Cyprus. She was the second of six children of parents Elias and Albina.

Theirs is a simple, poor and industrious family who raised their children in the faith and Christian life in the small Maronite community in Kormakiti. She was christened on July 26, 1939 with the name of Marina. On 1 November 1944, she received her confirmation.

Kormakiti, thanks to the presence of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, was one of the villages where the faith of the people and the missionary witness of the religious contributed to the birth of many vocations to the consecrated life.

Soon even Marina, barely a teenager, responded to the Lord’s call and entered Limassol as an aspirant. Subsequently, on 21 August 1956 she entered the pre-novitiate in Le Mans - France.

On 29 April 1958, she began her novitiate and on 2 May 1959 she made her religious profession and took the name of Sister Bernadette Skorti of the Apparition of Our Lady of Lourdes for her great devotion to the Virgin Mary.

After her profession, she returned to Cyprus to complete her studies at the Pedagogical Academy in Nicosia, Cyprus. After completing her academic studies, she immediately began her mission as a young and enthusiastic teacher in the state school in Kormakiti. She was a guide and mother for many pupils who attended the Kormakiti state school where she taught until 1976. She solemnly made her perpetual profession on August 23, 1964 in Troodos-Cyprus.

From 1969 to 1975, she assumed the office of Vicar Provincial. She was local superior of the community of Kormakiti from 1973 to 1976. The years of her stay in Kormakiti were fruitful years of great missionary zeal.

With her charismatic presence, she encourages young people to move forward, to dream of a beautiful future and above all to be proud Maronites. "For me, my whole life is Kormakiti, so everything good that happens to Kormakiti moves me and I want to be there". Her whole life will be dedicated to them, through schools, organizations, choirs and theater performances.

In 1976, Sister Bernadette had to leave Kormakiti to go to Limassol to assume the position of Provincial Superior. Here she continued her mission as an elementary school teacher until 1981.

The Lord is preparing her for new missionary paths, which she herself embraces in obedience and with great enthusiasm.

From 1981 to 1987, she was in the Generalate in Rome as vicar general.

Upon her return to Cyprus, Sister Bernadette was appointed Provincial Superior and held this office from 1988 to 1994. Driven by her passion for the younger generations, in 1988, in collaboration with expert people from the Maronite community, she founded the Maronite Catholic Youth of Cyprus. Foundation that has been growing and serving the Maronite community for 35 years.

During the sexennium of hers, Sister Bernadette Skorti is called to spread the sails and put out to sea. With the Provincial Council, she supports the request of the Carmelite Fathers and of the Maronite Bishop of the Diocese of Tripoli, Msgr. Joubair to open a new mission in Lebanon, in Menjez - Akkar. Sister Bernadette is tireless for the development of the mission in favor of the poorest. It turns to various organizations and benefactors for the construction of the school, the dispensary and the convent of the sisters.

In these flowering years, a new window opens towards Bulgaria. Sister Bernadette was surprised by the news of her return to Bulgaria, a land so dear to the history of the congregation. In fact, 1992 was the year of the return of the sisters to Bulgaria, a land of martyrs and new vocations. Sister Bernadette is enthusiastic and during her visits to the mission, she encourages not only the sisters but also the young people to work for the new evangelization in this fertile land.

From 1994 to 1995, she was a teacher at the Terra Santa School in Nicosia. However,

the Lord prepares her for a new mandate. With full availability and in obedience to the superiors, she assumed the new task of accompanying the young candidates to religious life.

In 1995, she was appointed pre-novitiate mistress at Rakovski in Bulgaria and in 1996 novitiate mistress. With great enthusiasm and in collaboration with the parish priests, she worked for the formation of the members of the Secular Franciscan Third Order and established the group of the Daughters of Mary. In 1997, she left Bulgaria for the new position of Provincial Superior. She held this office until 2003.

From 2003 to 2006, she was appointed provincial councilor, local superior and junior teacher in Limassol. From 2006 to 2009, she was provincial vicar, local superior and junior teacher.

In 2009, she was nominated Provincial Superior for her last six years. Slowly the disease begins to manifest itself and she embraces the Crucifix. Her long and painful ordeal begins. In recent years, suffering forces her to stay in bed. However, the zeal for souls in her heart is not extinguished. She is serene, smiling and kind. She thanks, apologizes, and communicates joy to acquaintances and guests who visit her. The disease progresses and she does not hold back. Loves to pray. Praise the Lord and the Virgin Mary by gazing up high, singing songs and hymns. Around her are the sisters of the community who assist her until her definitive fiat.





**Sr. Tarsilla Visentin  
of the Mother of Mercy**

*Born in Paese (Treviso)  
on 17 October 1931  
Died in Gemona  
on 20 September 2022*

Sister Tarsilla reached the last step of the vocation for which the Lord called her to life by following a long Christian-religious path always attentive to the ways that the Lord made her glimpse.

Born in Porcellengo di Treviso on 17 October 1931 into a good and large family, her father Antonio and her mother Pasqua Giroto wanted to accompany her to Holy Baptism the following day and at the age of 7, on 23 March 1938, again in Porcellengo, she was confirmed by Bishop of Treviso Mons. Antonio Mantiero.

Already in the family environment, Sr. Tarsilla manifested her particular talent by dedicating herself with true skill to 'sewing' practiced above all in the Treviso orphanage, where she consolidated her religious vocation which she felt within herself by having constant contact with the sisters of the village. With this desire, she entered into the Mother House in Gemona where she was welcomed on 17 July 1953. After the entrance into the novitiate on 20 May 1954, the following year,

24 May 1955, she celebrated her religious profession as a Franciscan missionary of the Sacred Heart.

After five years, she was ready for her perpetual profession, which also took place in Gemona on 24 May 1960.

Over the years, she has been sent to various realities where she could devote herself to activities suited to her sewing service: in the well-known orphanage of Lido dei Pini (1960-1963); in the rest home for the elderly in Paluzza (1963. 1967); in Vedelago with the girls (1967-1970 1980-88); in the rest home of Menegazzi-TV (1970 -1980); finally, in the Mother House where she has worked for over thirty years since 1988, packing or fixing the clothes of the sisters, from young to old.

Sr. Tarsilla was always at work, but she was also faithful to prayer both during the day where in the sewing room she invited people to recite the Holy Rosary and other prayers, as well as in church where she arrived a little early to get ready and arrange yourself internally.

This happened until a month ago when she was taken to the infirmary and on 20 September at 3.30 pm, while some sisters were next to her bed praying the Magnificat, Mary accompanied her to heaven. Sr. Tarsilla had chosen to always entrust herself to the "Mother of Mercy":

*O Immaculate Mother of Mercy,  
I take refuge under Your  
protection, asking that as our  
Mother You are always with  
me and shape my heart on the  
example of Your Heart.*

*I, your daughter, desire with all  
my life to serve you faithfully  
and entrust myself to You with  
humility and love.*



**Sr. Gianluisa Cagnin  
of the Merciful Jesus**

*Born in Treviso  
on 11 June 1935  
Died in Gemona  
on 27 October 2022*

Born in Treviso on 11.06.1935, she was the daughter of father Luigi and soon lost her mother, Favaro Regina.

At her baptism (June 13, 1935), a name dear to Treviso was chosen for her: 'Bertilla'. Then, at the age of 9, on 07.16.1944, she was confirmed in Zero Branco (TV). The vocation to consecrated life matured early in her heart. Two brothers also chose this path in life with her, one, Fr. Enrico, a Carmelite and missionary in Japan, the other Don Enrico, diocesan, parish priest in various towns in the Veneto region. She chose to enter in Gemona among the Franciscan missionaries of the Sacred Heart on 8 September 1961 and did her formation there. After the novitiate (12.09.1962), she pronounced the Holy Vows in the first Religious Profession, which took place on 14.09.1963, the feast of the Exaltation of the cross.

Her Perpetual profession followed on 14 September 1969. In 1964, she began her service in various communities of the Province working in the nursery school, until reaching the

‘mission par excellence’ she desired: the community of Niem, in Central Africa was proposed to her. Here the mothers competed to bring her children so much that she said, “If I listened to all of them, I would have so many children as many birds flying free in the air!”

Before leaving for Central Africa, she also prepared for the mission by attending the ‘first aid course’ organized by the volunteers who gave her the diploma. For about ten years in Niem she visited various villages accompanied by Fr. Arialdo Urbani who, after the prayer, left her to meet groups of mothers sitting under a tree full of joy in learning how to make some clothes for their children. Certainly not with a sewing machine, but with a needle and thread. Here the hope of being a missionary in name and in fact was fully realized!

Several times, she was asked to serve as local Superior in various communities of the Province, which she carried out with serenity, simplicity and without impositions.

Her open character witnessed so much joy around her: she always had her jokes ready and even when she was called to the mother house in 2014 to look after the wardrobe, she continued to support the sisters, especially the elderly, with her ready humor. Since September 2022, a physical illness manifested itself which in a short time made her immobile and, in the last three days, without being able to express words, but also without missing her usual smile.

On October 27, the sisters present at the passing of Sr. Gianluisa turned to Mary, trustingly asking for her support in these decisive moments of her life and imploring her intercession through the Magnificat.



**Sr. Carla Bettio  
of the Divine Love**

*Born in Paese (Treviso)  
on 01 April 1933  
Died in Gemona  
on 15 December 2022*

Born in Paese (TV) on 01. 04. 1933, Carolina, as her parents Emilio and Gemma Ghedin, called her in Holy Baptism (April 08, 1933), quickly went through the stages of her childhood and youth, first in her family, deeply Christian, where eighteen years old she heard the Lord’s call: “Follow me!”.

There is no time to waste when you feel the push of love in your heart that asks to give “everything and soon”, to be a total gift!

Thus, on September 15, 1951, in memory of the “Presentation of Mary in the temple”, Carolina also presented herself in the Convent of “St. Maria degli Angeli” in Gemona del Friuli to undertake her initial formation journey to be an FMSC.

She abandoned herself to that Love, which asks for total openness of mind and heart from the beginning when, after the year of postulancy, she was sent to Le Mans (France) where she celebrated her first profession on 04 October 1954.

A new life opened up for her, confirmed by the words of the Priest, “From now on you will

*be called Sr. Carla of the Divine love”. Here, after 5 years, she also lived her perpetual profession on 04 October 1959.*

With a great missionary spirit, after having offered 7 years of assistance in a retirement home in Attichy (France) and a year as a housekeeper in Sion (France), she welcomed with great joy the proposal to leave for Africa. With three other pioneers they opened the first house in Nkizok – Cameroon: Sr. Luigia Nasato, Sr. Dora Rossi and Sr. Stefania Serra. Here she lived all her life mainly making herself useful as an expert in cutting and sewing (graduated in 1982) and in parish ministry and missionary spirituality. In Nkizok (1963-1978; 1995-96), Nkongoa (1978-81; 1986-92 ); Minkom (1982-84; 1996-98), Nkoabang (1993-95; 1999-2000; 2008-2019), Kribi (1998-99), Gari Gombo (2000-03).

Over the years she has also held various positions in the Vice Province of “Holy Martyrs of Uganda”:

- Vice-Provincial in 1993 for a three-year period
- formator of the Junior sisters in 1994 in Nkoabang
- Local superior in various communities

By now having reached an advanced age and above all due to physical infirmity, in 2019 she was welcomed into the mother house in Gemona.

Here she spent three years engaging above all in missionary prayer and in the witness of a joyful and open fraternal communion.

For this we remember her, united with all the sisters of the Vice-Province of Cameroon, and we are grateful to the Lord for having given her to us as a sister Franciscan Missionary of the Sacred Heart.



**PACE E BENE** Periodico quadrimestrale  
delle **Suore Francescane Missionarie del Sacro Cuore**  
Casa Generalizia "ASISIUM" via Grottarossa, 301 - Roma  
tel. 06 3325831 - fax 06 33258320  
E-mail: [segretaria.gen@fmsc.it](mailto:segretaria.gen@fmsc.it)