

International Newsletter

Adorers of the Blood of Christ



Year XXVI – Issue 3
May - June 2024

ASC International Communications – General Administration - Via Maria De Mattias, 10 - 00183 Rome

www.adoratrici-asc.org redazioneasc@adoratrici-asc.org [Adoratrici del Sangue di Cristo/Adorers of the Blood of Christ](https://www.facebook.com/Adoratrici-del-Sangue-di-Cristo/)

Believe...Choose

I know a young woman who on the threshold of turning thirty gathered all her courage to take a step that was definitely longer than her gait. She chose between a more or less predictable life and one that was instead quite uncertain and outside the box. What strikes me about her is not only her courage but especially her risk-taking, that is, her taking a risk without the certainty of the outcome, of the future.

Then on reflection, I realize that after all, she did not come to that step overnight. It took her years to gather the courage, going through hundreds of doubts and thousands of questions to perhaps eventually find a few answers, but I believe they were the right ones for her. Her story tells me that what we are and do is not the result of chance or a stroke of luck or misfortune. We are the result of a journey made through years and experiences that have shaped us. The choice we make today is the result of what we have experienced before. When we feel ready even to take the risk, perhaps it is because we got there after a time of searching and discernment.

At this point I should reveal who the young woman I mentioned is, but I think the answer is almost obvious: Maria De Mattias. On March 4 we commemorated our 190th anniversary of foundation. How many ASCs have journeyed across the world in these 190 years! How many young women have made their choice. How many of them have remained faithful to that choice. How many have grown old trying to continue living according to their choice. We are among those ASCs. So let us celebrate our choice that has changed not only our own lives, but also that of all the people we have met and shared a stretch of road with. Let us celebrate it together! Let us celebrate and praise the Lord because eternal is God's mercy!

Sr. Barbara Perali, ASC

Editorial

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Self-Awareness Seminar

The seminar was held from April 8-12, 2024 and was very special for ASC participants over the age of twenty-two. The seminar was led by Sr. Janeth Srebalus of the Congregation of MM MERNOR SISTERS and covered various topics, thus giving each participant the opportunity to broaden her horizon and empower herself to make new decisions for living her personal and community life.

Holy Mass was celebrated each morning before the seminar, thus giving the participants the opportunity to unite their offerings with that of Jesus by sharing His Body and Blood. God's daily word was also a great help in reflecting on the life of the community.

The main theme of the seminar was self-awareness. Thanks to the topics prepared and offered by the presenter, everyone realized how beneficial and profitable it is to be self-aware, because self-awareness brings unity and solidarity in the life of the community and helps everyone realize their dreams (moving toward holiness). Therefore, this aspect is very important in each person's life, because it helps her achieve a quality of life that corresponds to her level of understanding and to coexist with different personalities without affecting the established rules.

The speaker began the seminar by inviting God the Holy Spirit to guide the mind and environment of each participant and then offered a brief reflection. After that she offered a video in which the change of a chrysalis through the different stages to becoming a complete butterfly was shown. She invited each person to reflect on the butterfly. She explained the characteristics of a butterfly, emphasizing in particular that it is a symbol of Easter happiness. Question: how can a butterfly be a symbol of Easter happiness? The answer is that Easter is joy. Therefore, the joy of Easter brings peace and happiness to all people. Similarly, a butterfly flies here and there and has attractive colors. Through this sign it shows that the risen Christ has brought joy and hope to all and invites anyone who has tasted that joy to share it with others.

In both words and deeds, the presenter went on to ask the participants what conclusions they had drawn from the butterfly image. Then each participant was invited to draw her own butterfly and answer questions focused on the purpose of the workshop.

She pointed out that just as a butterfly flies here and there quickly, so Christ seeks to remain with us in our growth stages to strengthen us in our structures. Then we must allow Him to remain in us so that He can create us according to His design. This is because in the stages of growth there are things that are hidden within and no one can discover them except by God's grace.

She described Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs as important in the developmental stages. She pointed out that in order to overcome selfishness, we need people to help us meet our basic needs, and especially we need to be and feel loved, appreciated and esteemed by others and also to have various responsibilities. Similarly, in the stages of growth, we saw that in order for a person to grow as such, she must be responsible according to God's plan, because this path has various stages and each stage has an important task along with its challenges.

We could also see that the basis of our behavior comes from our inner child. If our inner child is not well supported, it will greatly affect our adult life. We did group work in which we continued to analyze various behaviors and carefully observe the behaviors of our inner child. We saw the benefits of identifying our behaviors with numbers. In groups we were able to get to know each other and achieve more in our ability to continue to reflect on our behaviors.



After sharing the numbers of our behaviors, we continued with the session on feelings of anger, fear and anxiety, and we were able to discuss various ways to deal with them. We could see that everyone has feelings of anger, and this impacts each person in different ways. Likewise, the presenter emphasized that we should learn to reduce the power of anger to avoid hurting others and that fear affects the entire course of a person's life.

She highlighted two types of fear: ingrained fear that helps us avoid dangerous things, such as fearing sin or avoiding consequences in life; and unfounded/unwarranted fear that is based on past experiences people have had or threatening stories. After the discussion, she pointed out that when the state of fear/anxiety lasts for a long time, the person would need help, such as counseling, because the source might be in childhood.

Sr. Everegisla Costantine Mrosso, ASC

The Americas
USA Region

ASC Foundation Day

The anniversary of our foundation as a religious community is a favorite feast among members of the ASC family. March 4, 2024, marked the 190th anniversary of our founding and called for a celebration among sisters of the Belleville-St. Louis area and associates from Southern Illinois. The recently established Hearts in Communion committee - Sisters Ann Fearday, Kris Schrader, and Sarah Harbaugh - took the lead in planning festivities for the afternoon of Sunday, March 3, at Benedictine Living Center in Belleville, IL.

Sister M. Alan Wurth created a version of Bingo designed to help the partiers remember and celebrate our history. The Bingo caller would shout the name of a person, place, event, or date important in ASC history. If that call was on our card, we covered it with a chip and hoped to get a BINGO. The game winner would then be asked to tell the crowd why the person, place, etc. of the winning call is significant to our ASC congregation. It was a brilliant way to have fun sharing highlights of our history... even though there were no prizes, except the chance to generate gratitude for memories that unite us.

Sister Barbara Hudock led us in a prayerful reflection that invited us to recall people who have been rocks for us as we build on the foundation of our charism, living and loving in a communion of service for the good of God's people. Barb then invited each of us to share a memory at our tables of four. Gratitude wove its way among us and we knew again the strength and blessedness of our foundation.

In keeping with our Italian roots, the meal featured lasagna from Olive Garden, and a number of sisters provided sides of Italian breads, salads, and fruit plates. (Although not confirmed, the cake for dessert was likely from an Italian bakery).

Festivities continued Monday, March 4, with a Mass celebrated for sisters and residents at the Benedictine Living Center Chapel. Sister Joan Stoverink's introduction to the Eucharist invited all to imitate the love and mercy of Jesus Christ as witnessed by St. Maria De Mattias in founding the Institute on March 4, 1834.

Sister Angela Schrage shared reflections on readings that had been chosen especially for our feastday. Her call to REVEAL CHRIST'S LOVE echoed Maria's desire for each of us to serve God and those on the margins. Creative intercessions spoke of our need to be Maria's Legacy, followed by our renewal of vows. Music by Srs. Janet Sue Smith and Barb Biver was inspiring and uplifting to all who love to sing. A blessed two days of celebrating was enjoyed by all.



Photos by Sr. Mary Alan Wurth

Sr. Kate Reid, ASC

Anagni – Step by Step in Order to Give and Love

When Love calls you can only answer Yes!

One of the events planned for the celebration of the 190th anniversary of the foundation of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ Sisters was the meeting with youth and children on Friday, March 1, in Acuto.

The Mother House of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ welcomed about 120 children and youth engaged in a spiritual pilgrimage along the footsteps of St. Maria De Mattias, a journey of the soul that led them to ponder the profound meaning to be given to life and to contemplate a God of Love who gave all of Himself, all of His Blood, so that each person would feel precious in His eyes.

With her life testimony, the Woman of the Word, the Apostle of the Blood of Christ, St. Maria De Mattias, accompanied them on this wonderful journey within the house of Foundation. In groups the young people walked through four points of St. Maria De Mattias' life corresponding to four places: the **little school**, where St. Maria De Mattias welcomed the young girls and began her dedication; her **small bedroom**, the place of the heart where she intimately lived her relationship with the Lord; the **refectory** where she lived hope in Providence and fraternal sharing; the **small Church** where she announced God's Love to everyone.



Yes, the young people experienced a journey of the soul, which led them to a "call"... the CALL TO LOVE! All this was made possible thanks to the **power of "networking"**: heartfelt thanks to the mayor of Acuto, Augusto Agostini, to the priests of the dioceses of Anagni-Alatri and Frosinone-Veroli-Ferentino, to the diocesan Catholic Action of Anagni-Alatri and to all the lay people who generously committed themselves to organizing the "journey of the soul" and the fraternal agape for the many young people who participated in the event.

Sr. Cleopatra Subiaco, ASC

In Acuto on Friday, March 1, the Sisters Adorers of the Blood of Christ celebrated their foundress, St. Maria De Mattias, by organizing an event that involved the children and youth of the town, the entire diocese of Anagni Alatri and beyond. We all gathered there to share a spiritual journey together based on meditation, silence, rediscovery of our own "self" and the meaning of life. Not an easy task when you consider that the world is no longer what it was thirty years ago, where it was taken for granted that the Church was the meeting place for young people who spent their days there all together. We young people today are increasingly distant from the world of the Church and consequently find it hard to understand the meaning and importance of a spiritual journey, which is why we hardly get involved. We young people are the future, and it is for us today to rediscover and pursue initiatives and activities like the one on Friday.

It is a miracle that the Adorers of the Blood of Christ Sisters managed to pull it off, as they organized an unforgettable evening in the footsteps of St. Maria De Mattias. The faith and charism of this woman guided the sisters who managed to perform a small miracle by bringing more than a hundred young people to the church to experience an inner pilgrimage together! Crucial was the strength of the love and faith inherent in the hearts of the sisters who, with their charism and contagious smiles, made this a unique experience that surely left something important and profound in the hearts of all of us children. It was an evening that each, in his or her own way, will carry in their hearts. We need examples like this to rediscover our faith and the true meaning of life. It was an evening that made us reflect and gave us hope to still believe in the Church, to still believe that we can be our Church together.



Aurora Amati

Easter at Schaan Convent

On March 31, 2024, we celebrated a liturgy of the word with families at the Easter Vigil. The wind had been raging through “Ländle Liechtenstein” for days, so we were only able to light a small fire. Sr. Regina Hassler led the service and blessed the Easter fire. She lit the light of the Easter candle. “Lumen Christi” rang out three times, to which everyone gave their response “Deo Gratias”. Our two ministrants, Trinity and Margarita, helped out with great dignity and the necessary seriousness.

For the small children, our employee Susanne Falk-Eberle, an ASC associate, organized the Easter Vigil catechesis with the help of a mother. Everyone was united in the chapel for the Prayer of the Our Father. The subsequent Easter egg hunt was organized in our garden. In the dark, the children and young people searched for their chocolate eggs with flashlights. They looked like little fireflies.

On Easter Monday, we celebrated First Communion with 11 children and their families. Caritas priest Wilfried Blum and Sr. Maria Hammerer organized the service on the topic “Go with us”. The Gospel of Emmaus was the central theme of this year’s celebration. These lessons take place outside of school during the months of September to Easter. Most of the children come from families who have problems with the local church.

In September last year, our Archbishop Wolfgang Haas retired. Since then, we have had an episcopal administrator, Benno Elbs, from the nearby diocese of Feldkirch in Austria. This is a temporary situation until we get a new archbishop. Many of the faithful have renewed hope that the Liechtenstein Church will become more cosmopolitan again.



Sr. Maria Hammerer, ASC

From Dialogue to Deeper Relationships

I want to share a new experience I've had working with families. In 2022, Sr. Nadzieja Raczyckaja and I started making apostolate trips to St. Francis Parish in Kopiszczce, near Minsk, where the Capuchin Friars work. There we met families belonging to the Marriage Encounter movement. In November they invited me to their weekend retreat. The rule is that the meetings are led by the families and a "spiritual" person. At that time I went as a participant. It was a new experience for me, even though I make my retreat every year. When I went, I didn't know how it would be conducted and what I would find. But what I experienced exceeded my expectations. I was very impressed by the testimony of the families, their way of experiencing relationships that they learn to build on principles of dialogue.

The four principles I experienced are: listen more than you talk; understand more than you judge; share more than you argue; and above all, forgive everything. I have seen how, in various conflicting and complicated situations, trust and love can be rebuilt through dialogue. This retreat time encouraged me to learn to live more consciously and more deeply in my relationships in community and with other people. It helped me to see what builds our relationships and what destroys them, to better understand ourselves and see our needs, and to allow God to enter into all these situations. This experience has given me hope to engage in relationships in a richer way.

After the retreat, we met monthly in the parish of Kopiszczce in a small group. This allowed us to develop what had been started during the retreat.

This year, in February and April, I was invited to go as an assistant leader. It seemed that I already knew and understood a lot. However, I realized that the preparation itself was becoming like a second retreat for me, which touched on different areas of my life and the way I live them and I became aware of my needs, feelings and attitudes.

At the end of the next-to-last retreat, I wrote, "I leave with the thought that God is sending me some opportunities to live my vocation in a more colorful, mature and rich way."

With a sense of gratitude, hope and joy, I share this experience with you.



Sr. Hanna Dziaulik, ASC



Family of the Blood of Christ Day



On Saturday, April 13, the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, together with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, organized a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Great Baptismal Covenant of Croats in Knin. With this pilgrimage, for the ninth consecutive time, the Day of the Blood of Christ Family was celebrated. More than 500 participants, including ASC, CPPS, Associates and members of Precious Blood communities from different places in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, gathered at Our Lady's shrine.

The Blood of Christ Family Day is very important for us because we spend time together in communion, prayer and getting to know each other better. All of us honor the Blood of Christ in our daily lives and we want to grow in our spirituality by celebrating the gift of redemption together and encourage each other to be able to live the fruits of our communion in the Blood of Christ.

The Lord has united us with that red thread – the Blood of Christ – through our founders: St. Gaspar Del Bufalo and St. Maria De Mattias, making us one big family.

The city of Knin was chosen as the place for our meeting this year. Throughout history this city has been the capital of Croatian kings and bishops, and at the same time had great significance for the Croatian people during the recent war. Therefore, as a spiritual family, we wanted to pray and celebrate Holy Mass at that very place, offering the Blood of Christ as a ransom and a force of reconciliation for all the victims of our history.

At the beginning of the meeting, Fr. Ilija Grgić, CPPS, gave the welcome greeting in that beautiful church and gave a short meditation on the Blood of Christ, emphasizing the importance of the blood flowing in our veins, but also the importance of the Blood of Christ that was shed out of love for every human person. "Without blood there is no life," he stressed, "so we too could not live if we were not saved and redeemed by the immeasurable price of the Blood of our Lord."

Before the Eucharistic celebration we prayed the Precious Blood Chaplet led by representatives of the different Communities of the Blood of Christ.

Monsignor Tomislav Rogić, Bishop of Šibenik, was presider at the Holy Mass. In his fervent sermon, he encouraged us pilgrims to contemplate the life of our Savior, His passion, suffering, crucifixion and shedding of the Precious Blood, which is an expression of God's love and desire for the salvation of humankind, through the most precious gift that is His Son, sacrificed out of love.

We are called to recognize only love in everything: God's love for humanity and its salvation. When the Father gives his most precious gift, his Son, and allows his pain and suffering, suffering until the last drop of Blood is shed, then nothing but Love is manifested there. Love for humanity. Through that very warm homily, we had the opportunity to understand and feel the great and immeasurable Love; the mystery that takes our breath away.

At the end of the Eucharistic celebration, Sr. Zdravka Leutar, ASC, regional superior, addressed those present, first of all thanking the Lord for the gift of this wonderful meeting. She also thanked all those present for their participation and organization. We concluded the Eucharistic celebration with the song, Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia! - which was a reflection of our common gratitude to Jesus and our Mother Mary.

I was really especially touched by this celebration and this day in which we all participated, joyfully contributing in order to experience a beautiful time of fraternity. In these pilgrimages it is very meaningful to meet with other members of the Community of the Blood of Christ, as well as the Adorers and priests.

Full of joy at the end of the celebration, we had the opportunity to visit the Citadel of Knin, the Castle where the flag of Croatia once again flies. Thanks be to God! We returned home carrying gratitude to the Lord for the wonderful day in our hearts.

May the Blood of Christ always be blessed!

Irena Plavšić, ASC Associate



With Our Hands in the Dirt

Laudato Si Camp of IPS of Bari



This academic year a “Laudato si’ garden” was designed at the middle school of the Precious Blood Institute in Bari. In March, the training started with classroom germination of seeds of local varieties such as cherry tomatos, zucchini and green beans. The three classes have been engaged at various levels in carrying out this educational horticulture project. In particular, the third class conducted a preliminary SWOT analysis to understand the benefits, opportunities and critical points to be solved for this project in order to foster in students their own critical skills. Then, all three classes were actively engaged in seed germination care, learning day by day the importance of giving them continuous care.



On April 26, an additional important educational moment materialized with the inauguration of the educational garden at the Bari Carbonara community.

It began with a moment of prayer on creation, which helped us reflect on the importance of caring for nature that God has given us. This was followed by a theoretical and practical lesson with some agronomists, who together with the teachers then followed the students in the actual transplanting of vegetables, herbs and planting of flowers. An exceptional example of agro-ecology was created, and the synergy of these components allowed for garden-based learning, from which each student was able to learn and be enriched by the experience that mother earth allowed us to have. The students learned how the main fruits that reach our table every day are made and produced, gaining awareness of the work behind it and the production process.



In the second part of the morning, one of the experts gave a lecture on biological control in line with sustainable agriculture, which ended with an entomological description of two natural antagonists, the ladybug and the green lacewing, that were brought into the field and released directly by the fascinated and enthusiastic children.



It was a very interesting experience that saw the students not only engaged, but filled with wonder at having learned something new and for having created the teaching garden with their own hands, which they will take care of in time. It was

a rich learning experience, where everyone became aware not only of the wonders of creation, but especially how important it is to protect it, take care of it, not pollute it or mistreat it, for the immense gift that it is.

At the end of class there was also a time for sharing meals and leisure games, through which the children relaxed and enjoyed sharing time together.

We would like to thank the Precious Blood Institute for allowing this new educational experience by raising awareness of creation, the experts who taught and conveyed the beauty of nature to the children, the teachers who accompanied the children in this experience, the parents who made themselves available in preparing the social time, and all the students for the commitment they always put into carrying out lessons and projects.

Teachers

Sr. Marika Console, ASC and Antonella Guerra

Entrance into the Novitiate

May 1, 2024

"Here I am Lord, for you called me."
(1 Samuel 3)



Each year, for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, Pope Francis invites us to reflect on the precious gift of the Lord's call to each of us, as members of his faithful pilgrim people, to participate in his loving plan and to embody the beauty of the Gospel in different states of life.

A day like today is always a good occasion for us to recall with gratitude to the Lord the faithful, persevering and frequently hidden efforts of all those who have responded to a call that embraces their entire existence.

As the Church celebrated the feast of St. Joseph, the patron of all workers, we Adorers of the Blood of Christ rejoiced in the Lord for the generous and courageous response of our nine postulants who have decided to follow the call of their hearts, going forward in their religious formation as they begin their Canonical Novitiate. Three of the novices are from the Region of Zagreb: Antonija Radosoljic, Mirjana Solomun and Tereza Marelic, one from the Region of Poland: Marija Perevozchikova and five from the region of Tanzania: Alisia Abera Sweetbert, Anarissa Yusuph Magenge, Maria Israel Jackson, Monika Samsoni Pinda and Neema Laurent Mwandu. These committed women willingly responded to God's call to discipleship, facing the challenges of religious life with free and joyful hearts, while placing all their trust and confidence in God.

The presence of the Regional Superiors of the respective Regions and the delegate of the Regional Superior of Tanzania, members of the General Administration and the regional council of Italy and other sisters of the surrounding area gave great joy to the novices and made their celebration so special and memorable. It was a wonderful and joyful day for all of us to remember our vocational call.

While we thank God for the gift of their vocation, let us accompany them with our prayer, love and support so that they may become rooted in Christ Jesus as vital members of our Congregation and authentic apostolic women who collaborate with Jesus in His work of redemption.

As Our Foundress St. Maria De Mattias says, "It is necessary to work hard with the women in formation for the love of our Lord. It is a vineyard that will not yield fruit if it is not cultivated. Let us therefore pray for these women who are entrusted to our care." (Lett. 381)

Novitiate Community

Master, teach us to pray

Spiritual retreat for postulants



I am grateful to the Lord for his gift to spend a few days with the postulants who were preparing for the novitiate praying with them and for them.

Our journey began with a pilgrimage to Vallecorsa, where we stopped at the places that marked the milestones of St. Maria De Mattias' Christian initiation and vocation. Sr. Isabella and Sr. Concetta warmly welcomed us, offering hospitality and a good lunch.

Arriving in the evening in Acuto, we wanted to ask for the intercession of the Foundress before her relic in the little church of the Motherhouse. All the sisters we met, Sr. Teresina, Sr. Martha, Sr. Rani, Sr. Maria Grazia, Sr. Maria, Sr. Angela, Sr. Transito, Sr. Gabriella, showed us affection and welcome, ensuring the atmosphere of serenity that helped us to pray.

There were five of us: Marija from Russia, Mirjana from Australia, Antonjia and Tereza from Croatia. The postulants from Tanzania were unable to join us, but they too had their spiritual retreat in preparation for entering the novitiate a few days before us. Sr. Mariamma, the novice directress, was with us only for the beginning of our stay because she had to return to Rome to welcome the other companions from Tanzania.

We prayed in the silence of Acuto, devoting ourselves to listening to the Word of God and reflecting on the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The weather was very variable, tending toward cold and rainy, but it allowed us to greet Acuto on a beautiful sunny day.

The young people were very committed and eager to follow the Lord. I believe the Holy Spirit found docile and joyful hearts in them. I thank them for their prayers and for that underlying serenity that accompanied the days spent together.

In time the fruits will ripen!

Sr. Patrizia Pasquini, ASC



General Administration Calendar



May 9 – July 9: Sr. Danijela and Sr. Wiesława are in the United States to practice their English, visit the sisters of the Region and participate in the Election Assembly of the USA Region.

Birthdays: Let's Celebrate Life

May

<u>40th Birthday</u>		
Sr. Liana Campanelli	05/24/1984	Italy
<u>60th Birthday</u>		
Sr. Mariola Borawska	05/02/1964	Wrocław
Sr. Mila Pagcial	05/04/1964	The Philippines
<u>80th Birthday</u>		
Sr. Giuseppina Rinaldi	05/28/1944	Italy
<u>90th Birthday</u>		
Sr. Janet Marie Wilhelm	05/09/1934	USA

June

<u>30th Birthday</u>		
Sr. Hang Nguyen	06/11/1994	USA
Sr. Rojamani Eete	06/30/1994	India
<u>40th Birthday</u>		
Sr. Venosa Joseph Mallya	06/13/1984	Tanzania
Sr. Genesis Thomas Baraka	06/14/1984	Tanzania
<u>60th Birthday</u>		
Sr. Vesna Abramović	06/02/1964	Zagreb
<u>90th Birthday</u>		
Sr. Giovanna Petitti	06/24/1934	Italy
Sr. Teresa Battilana	06/28/1934	Italy

Religious Profession Anniversaries

May 12 – Wichita

65th Anniversary

- Sr. Bernadine Wessel
- Sr. Nancy Hanes
- Sr. JoAnn Mark
- Sr. Teresa Bahr

70th Anniversary

- Sr. Jeannine Bahr
- Sr. Laurentia Koehler

75th Anniversary

- Sr. Mary Kevin Rooney

80th Anniversary

- Sr. Francella Bahr

June 16 – Zagreb

50th Anniversary

- Sr. Zrinka Ravnjak



Our best wishes and prayers!



International Newsletter

Adorers of the Blood of Christ

Bimonthly Newsletter

edited by the

Adorers of the Blood of Christ

International Communications – General Administration

Via Maria De Mattias, 10 - 00183 ROME

Year XXVI, Issue 3, May - June 2024

Editorial Committee

Barbara Perali, ASC

Debora Brunetti

Translations by

S. Matija Pavić - Croatian

S. Betty Adams - English

S. Anastazia Floriani - Swahili

S. Bozena Hulisz - Polish

S. Clara Albuquerque - Portuguese

S. Miriam Ortiz - Spanish

S. Johanna Rubin - German

They have returned to their Heavenly Home

04/07/2024	Sr. Augusta Fessler	Schaan
04/17/2024	Sr. Francesca Girardi	Italy
04/26/2024	Sr. Vanilda De Souza Lobato	Brazil