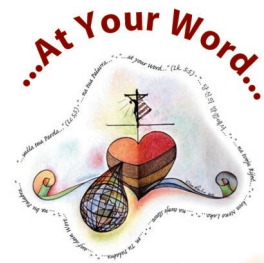


International Newsletter

Adorers of the Blood of Christ



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Community Mission and Witness

Editorial

This year's celebration of the 30th anniversary of the death of our U.S. sisters in Liberia, who are called Martyrs of Charity by St. John Paul II, coincided with the celebration of the 96th World Missionary Day.

The theme of the Pope's message, *you shall be my witnesses*, (Acts. 1:8) had a special impact on me. In fact, in commenting on the Church's Missionary Call to the baptized and bearing on the text of Paul VI's Document, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Francis emphasizes the communal character of mission and witness: "Evangelization is never an individual and isolated act, but a profoundly ecclesial one." (n. 60)

Our martyred sisters were a community of Adorers in Liberia who evangelized and did the work of human promotion in Monrovia in the ministries of teaching and health care to their brothers and sisters. Like St. Maria De Mattias, they witnessed Christ's charity to their dear neighbor and were committed to building peace, the beautiful order of things that Jesus came to establish on earth.

Their strongest witness was their presence, the community: a group of women united by the same dream – to collaborate with Christ in the redemption of the world. It is a collective work that is built by the commitment of each person and through the gift of each person. So they left everything to follow Jesus even in Monrovia, ready to share the sufferings of the civil war with the Liberian people, the precariousness, the risks, and finally their lives, with the people and like so many of them. (LC 25)

The ASC community is founded on the mission that begins precisely by its being a presence of women who witness a mutual and respectful love for each other. The experience of mutual love in community is an irreplaceable apostolic witness. (LC 9)

Pope Francis in his words continues to shed light on the Christian witness of our sisters when he states that Christians are not sent into the world to do mission but to be Christ's witnesses.

"It is Christ, and the risen Christ, to whom we are to witness and whose life we are to share. Christ's missionaries are not sent to communicate themselves, to show off their persuasive qualities and abilities or their managerial skills. They have, instead, the highest honor of offering Christ, in word and deed, proclaiming the Good News of his salvation to all with joy and boldness, like the first apostles."

Therefore, in the final analysis, the true witness is the "martyr," the one who gives their life for Christ, reciprocating His gift to us of Himself. "The first motivation for evangelizing is the love of Jesus that we have received, the experience of being saved by Him that impels us to love Him more and more" (*Evangelii gaudium*, 264).

As we thank the Trinity for the gift of Joel, Barbara Ann, Shirley, Agnes, and Kathleen, we ask the Lord to continue our journey as joyful witnesses of the Father's Love poured out in the life of His Son, Jesus Christ, for the redemption of humanity and all creation.

Sr. Maria Grazia Boccamazzo, ASC

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Signs of the Times: the Elderly – Our Future



Pope Francis' catechesis on old age has clearly revealed to us that the elderly are a sign of the times and are our future. God always manifests Himself in the small signs, in what we hastily dismiss as insignificant. In particular, for our society, which values and exalts only what is productive, the elderly person becomes a second-class citizen. God's wisdom goes in the opposite direction. Thus, what is insignificant to the world is important to God. What St. Paul writes in his First Letter to the Corinthians is fulfilled: *But God has chosen what is foolish in the world to confound the wise. God has chosen what is weak in the world to confound the strong. God has chosen what is lowly and despised to reduce to nothing the things that are.*

Since the time of the pandemic, the Church has become more aware of the reality of the world of the elderly and God's call to care for them, a form of poverty to which to respond. An online workshop "For a Culture of Care", was held Oct. 6-8, 2022 with purpose of listen to each other about how we live, feel, and are responding to our call to care for our elders. Regional superiors, councilors in charge of the sector, sisters in charge of communities for older sisters and an older sister from each region were invited to participate in the workshop.

The first part of the meeting, was led by Sr. Gabriella Grossi, ASC, who presented the figure

of the elderly in the Bible, dwelling particularly on the prophetess Anna, whose prophecy appealed so much to the sisters and, indeed, greatly enriched the vision of humanity and spirituality of the "Third Age". Participants shared their reflections in groups.

In the other two sessions, Sr. Mary Peter Lilian Di Maria, O. Carm., Director of the New York Geriatric Center and a specialist in geriatric care, despite not being in perfect health, shared the results of the questionnaire on the needs of the elderly Adorers in light of some real aspects of life. The reading revealed that there are several aspects which need attention in the congregation, related to the country in which one lives, and to the need to be aware that each person is a bearer of her culture, that of her family of origin, of her personal family and that of the ASC community.

When we enter a community, the most important culture is that of the community itself. This is how the community continues to live. Together we must sustain this culture and contextualize the needs of the whole community: *Serving the elderly sisters is a true witness to God's love, and your Community has the great privilege of sharing in Christ's redemptive work by listening to their vulnerability and walking with each of them in solidarity.*

Also after Sister Mary Peter's presentation, there was time for group work to answer questions such as:

1. How can we be a hope-filled presence for one another in all our regions in relation to what we have learned from the survey results presented?

2. What advice would St. Maria De Mattias give to the whole community to live up to her motto "Every person is worth the blood of Jesus Christ" and how does this guide our vision and mission for the care of the elderly?

The group responses were very interesting. On the third day the speaker brought us back to concrete choices. The need to work together to develop congregational guidelines emerged from the work of the groups. These guidelines would be useful for the regions to draft their own programs.

The presence of the older sisters, who spoke and shared their experiences, made these days a true gift from God. The congregation expressed gratitude to the General Superior for her insight, and to Sr. Bridget, contact councilor who has been working with the focus group for months to organize on this project. We would like to conclude with a few comments from the participants.

Sr. Bogumiła Karaban, one of the older sisters in Wrocław Region living in Bolesławiec, participated in the workshop on the culture of care. What follows is her sharing at the end of the meeting.

This meeting was a great enrichment for me. I am very grateful for the opportunity to attend this meeting. I am now even more aware of the value of my old age.

The good God gave me life and called me into this world. There is the time of birth, the time of childhood, the time of youth and the time of maturity. After many years of serving God in apostolic work, the time has come for me to leave that and think about eternity, although it was difficult for me to accept. Therefore, this meeting strengthened my faith and illuminated my time of being an elderly religious person with its light.

For some time now I have been trying to use this time creatively, striving to deepen my spiritual life through prayer and zealously serving sisters with love and joy, offering my sufferings for the needs of the whole world. I ask God that we can all meet together in eternity.

Sister Elżbieta Kurnatowska also lives in the Bolesławiec community and takes care of the older sisters living there. She commented:

I did not expect it to be such a joyful and rich meeting. I especially benefitted from the experience of those who support older people, and found the sharing rich, as well as finding solutions and ways forward together. Very important things were heard and said.

I appreciate the elderly sisters, their involvement in daily life and community events. I admire their willingness to serve despite illness and lack of strength.

In my retirement home community in Bolesławiec, the younger sisters lovingly care for the older sisters and are ready to provide for their needs. The experience of sisters from other regions is valuable to us, and we would like them to share concrete methods of working with older sisters. Therefore, we hope to create an international group to help us in this regard. We need to discuss the reality and adopt some strategies for the future. In the communities we need to help each other and to collaborate with the laity. Together, we ASCs need to prepare for this event.

I saw the joy of the senior sisters at this meeting. They felt even more noticed, appreciated and loved.

Sr. Maria Grazia Boccamazzo, ASC



Youth and the Elderly: Prophecy of Truth

Workshop on the Culture of Care and Accompaniment of Senior Sisters



Thanks to God for the General Administration who was able to read the signs of the times and respond through the Workshop on care for our of senior sisters, enlightened by the reflection of Sr. Gabriella Grossi, ASC, and Sr. Mary Peter Lilian Di Maria, a Carmelite. On the 6th, 7th & 8th, the workshop was given online, the theme was Accompaniment and care of our senior Sisters. The speakers taught with great love.

The workshop was very good. Personally, I am grateful and I appreciated the creativity used. I got a new awareness of my calling after seeing the senior sisters happy and strong. What touched my heart was the joy, peace and warmth on their faces, their sharing which came from the bottom of their hearts and in the knowledge of encounter with Jesus who calms them in this period of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual change. (2Cor 4:16-17)

The sisters also shared their heart of gratitude to the Congregation who continue to take care of them, their faith, hope and love for God, their patience, willingness and openness in sharing, and the desire to continue serving God faithfully and the joy of being among young people in their old age. During the group sharing, it was said that **“in Religious life there is no retirement. This is just a journey from one stage to another stage.”**

The important thing is to grow in this culture of care of our older Sisters having more attention for their needs, to listen to them, show them love, appreciate their contribution and embrace their presence in the Community, Region and

Congregation. I saw life in their old age. Indeed old age is a treasure, medicine, wisdom, life, strength, blessings and guardianship, again is happiness and grace for our Congregation which they support with their prayers and offerings.

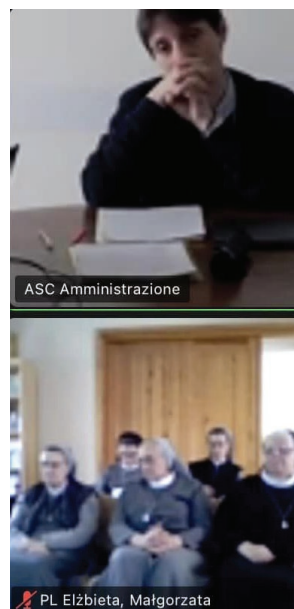
I also agree to have guidelines as a Congregation and it is a blessing to have formation for Religious life to nurture us to accept ourselves in various stages of our lives in order to have a good beginning and an end with the fruits of happiness and hope (YBS 25: 3-5.) I have learned a lot for those of us who are in the process of moving into old age. The seminar has been a great gift, which will help us from now on, as we age.

For the young people, I was touched by the willingness to receive the message of the seminar with a positive attitude. In Tanzania, other Regions and Foundations, everyone is important, we need each other.

The General Administration organized the seminar very well. I was very touched by the sharing of each group, when we look at our older sisters, let us prepare ourselves.

Thank you very much.

Sr. Lucina Johaness, ASC
Regional Superior
Tanzania



Report about the 2nd Formation Meeting of ASCs with Temporary Vows

At noon on October 1 the second online formation meeting for all the ASCs with temporary vows in the Congregation was held. We in Guinea Bissau attended the meeting.

The theme of the meeting, "Consecrated Life and Vows in the Blood of Christ Today," was organized by CIS (International Spirituality Center) and directed by Sister Bridget Pulickakunnel, general councilor.

In her presentation, Sister Bridget had us reflect on our ASC consecration in the Church and in the world, as women called to imitate the example of our teacher, Jesus, who was aware of his call and mission, but decided to go up to Jerusalem where he would shed all his blood on the cross for the salvation of the entire world.

She asked us to be mindful of ourselves and others, strengthening this relationship in community and personal prayer, following the steps of Jesus who was sensitive, merciful, kind, loving and compassionate, and who was able to offer his life for all people, because he is a God who walks with his people. These considerations were interesting because the theme is current and was presented very well.

In the second part, Sister Bridget told us about the evangelical counsels: poverty, obedience and chastity.

To be obedient we need to have trust in God and freedom. The vow of chastity leads us to renounce the natural right to marriage and embrace celibacy, in total love for Jesus. Chastity also makes us brides, religious and consecrated women, while poverty brings us closer to Christ and makes us more in solidarity with the poor,

trusting more and more in Divine Providence. She also stressed the value of the Blood of Christ in our consecration and the ASC values summed up in a simple and charitable life. She invited us to always invoke the power of the Blood for the poor, the marginalized and the dying.

Then we all shared what had touched us. At the end Sr. Nadia thanked everyone and promised to continue this formation, reminding us of the importance of learning at least one of the two languages of the congregation. In fact,

during the meeting we encountered some difficulties due to the instability of the connection and translation, (five languages) which made it difficult to understand some parts of the message.

Nevertheless, the meeting was very good!

For all this we thank Sister Nadia and the General Council very much for the initiative, which we found very useful, and we ask all of you to pray for us that we may persevere in our consecration.



Sr. Bighada Tambá, ASC
Sr. Diana António Ialá, ASC
Sr. Ludimila António Danfa, ASC
Sr. Tânia Bilimbo Mendes, ASC
Sr. Victoria Marcel Mancal, ASC

Trip to Guatemala

Amanda Gorman touched many of us with her flowing imagery and turn of phrase. "So let us not return to what was normal, but reach toward what is next...For wherever we come together, we will forever overcome."

Living and ministering in Guatemala was normal for 33 years. When I left last year, I wondered how to maintain the ASC connection with the faculties I had accompanied. And I questioned how to "reach toward what was next" when it wasn't clear what that was.

Zoom has certainly figured into that new normal. But as we all know, it is no replacement for face to face, smiling eyes, small group interaction, and shared laughter. And so, I had the opportunity in April to return to Guatemala and with three different school faculties, "reach toward the next," leading in-service opportunities and facilitating processes for writing mission statements. And oh how we laughed. It was a gift.

Soon we celebrate "World Teacher Day." I have been so blessed to walk with many teachers who give their all and are such examples of commitment, compassion, and caring. They have a marvelous spirit of community and work to support one another and challenge one another.

I know that my faith has deepened because of their witness. And my relationship with our spirituality is more alive because of their incredible devotion to María De Mattias, someone they identify with, a woman who understood village life, believed in education for women, knew great suffering and had witnessed terrible bloodshed. In her, they see their own mothers and find a great advocate for their work on behalf of the poorest. Continue to keep them in your prayers.

Sr. Kris Schrader, ASC



God's Love Poured Out

On 21 October, the Adorers of the Blood of Christ in the United States celebrated the 30th anniversary of the death of the five ASCs killed during the civil war in Liberia. The ceremony was held in the Benedictine Living Community, the house where the sisters from the former Ruma province have been living since January of this year. The event was also made more impressive by the presence of the three Liberian women who fled to the United States in 1990 and the presence of some of the victims' relatives. During the prayer, Sr Janet McCann welcomed those present with these words:

We welcome all to this celebration of the 30th anniversary of the death of five remarkable Adorers of the Blood of Christ who along with many thousands of Liberians gave their lives during an atrocious civil war in Liberia. We most especially welcome the members of the Sister martyrs' families who are able to be with us today.... Why Liberia? Let's listen to the story....

The first group of Adorers left for Liberia in 1971 at the request of a missionary priest. Our sisters in Liberia fell in love with the people and served for more than 20 years despite civil unrest and other challenges. Over time, various Adorers would staff schools, parishes, clinics, and hospitals.

A civil war in Liberia started in 1989 and made daily life increasingly dangerous so that by 1991, the five sisters based in Liberia returned to the States out of concern for their safety. However, they followed their hearts back to Liberia the following year.

Everything changed in October 1992 when the five were murdered.

On October 20, Sisters Barbara Ann Muttra and Mary Joel Kolmer were ambushed and killed by gunmen along a dirt road they traveled to return a worker to his home. Three days later, on October 23, soldiers shot and killed Sisters Kathleen McGuire, Agnes Mueller, and Shirley Kolmer in front of their convent in Gardnersville.

In the end, more than a quarter of a million people would die in a brutal civil war that did not distinguish soldier from citizen. The blood of these five noble women is now part of the soil of

Liberia, mingled forever with the blood of those they loved and served.

Faith calls us to seek the sacred in the mundane, the extraordinary in the ordinary. In the Catholic Church, a "martyr of charity" is someone who gave his or her life while performing an act of Christian charity. We remember our sisters as martyrs—martyrs of charity radically committed to their ministry, the people of Liberia whom they loved and who loved them. Their lives of loving care of the Liberian people has left an indelible mark and we give thanks!

Ramona Chebli, a former aspirant to the Adorers who fled Liberia with Shirley and Joel in 1990, now lives in the United States and holds an advanced nursing degree. She sees the sisters' return to Africa in 1991 as an expression of love for the Liberian people and the wider Church.

The Sisters who died are a reminder to all of us that life should be lived until the very last second, that the time we have on this earth is finite, and that if we are serious about leaving it a better place than we found it, we had better get moving. Their life made manifest Jesus' words, "Whatever you did for the least of these... you did for me."

(Barbara Pawlikowski, U.S. Catholic 7/11/16)

Ongoing needless killings and violence all around us move each of us here to consciously go beyond the numbing reaction often engendered by constant news of war and violence, and commit to be people of compassion, supporting those in need as Christ taught us.

May the death of the Sisters stir within us a renewed Spirit of reverence, respect, and reconciliation.

Agnes, Barbara Ann, Kathleen, Mary Joel, and Shirley, may your deaths disturb us so we will see how far we have to go to make justice and peace a reality.

From the prayer ritual at Belleville on October 21,

2022

Maria of the Most Holy Cross

Blessed be Jesus Christ!

Dear sisters, we would like to share with you our day of celebration! On October 2, 2022, in St. Barbara Parish in Wałbrzych, a solemn Mass was held to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Associates of the Blood of Christ in our parish. Present with us were the Adorers of the Blood of Christ Sisters from Wrocław: Sr. Ewa Kleps, Sr. Teresa Jaszczyszyn and Sr. Bożena Matomisz, to whom we are very grateful!

Sr. Teresa enriched the Celebration with her homily on the Blood of Christ today, which was profound and moving. It was a great joy to listen to the wisdom of a faithful and experienced Adorer of the Blood of Christ, who especially encouraged us to reflect and put into practice the knowledge transmitted about the truth, strength and immense love in the Blood of Christ.

Another important aspect for us during the Mass was the blessing of the chaplet of the Blood of Christ, which will accompany us during important celebrations in the Parish. We are very proud and happy about this!

After Mass, the celebration ended with a performance entitled "Maria of the Holy Cross," that is, a staging of the life of St. Maria De Mattias. Her fears, doubts, temptation, her conversations with Jesus.... An incredible experience! The woman who played St. Maria De Mattias did it beautifully and sang beautifully! The play is an original work by the William-Es National Theater of Wałbrzych. We are grateful to the Wałbrzych theater artists and our pastor! May the Lord reward them! After the Mass and the play, we were invited to lunch by Kasia Pakula, the animator of the Associates. How much joy we experienced that day!

Meetings like this, conversations and celebrations like this should be organized more often; in fact it helps us a lot, because it strengthens and renews our faith. I know what I am writing, because for some time I have been distancing myself from God.... My motto is "Without God one cannot take even one step forward." However, in the course of my life I too have been lost. Had it not been for my friend

Kasia, the current animator of Associates, I probably would not have made it.... But now I am here! I am back in the Associates group and have resumed my journey with God! I am happy and grateful for this day and the people I met! The power of the Blood of Christ is immense!

***Blessed be the Blood of Jesus Christ!!!
Dorota Nowak***



The Joy of Being an Adorer

October 1, 2022 was a special day for us junior sisters, because we could meet again all of our companions throughout the world online. It was wonderful to see everybody again and to listen to Sister Bridget, who was talking about the topic of Consecrated Life and the Vows, in the Blood of Christ today.

We started with the Word of God (Rev 12: 7-12), which made us more conscious about the power of the Blood of Christ. For us it was really a rich encounter because everything is connected with the Bible, Church and our Constitutions. Our awareness of how we should live our consecrated life in a radical way grew. And how important it is to be a sign to the others, that they can see the love of God through us. Not only a sign like Saint Maria De Mattias said "Our congregation itself must become a living image of that divine charity with which this blood was shed, and of which it was and is sign, expression, measure and pledge." (LC 2).

We heard how we have to wake up our compassion, so that through our compassion we can act, and do deeds of charity. As Pope Francis says: "When the spiritual life is preoccupied with self-interest, there is no more space for others, no more place for the poor, there is no listening to the God's voice, there is no sweet joy of His love, there is no enthusiasm to do good deeds." We can see that life isn't just days passing by but a true gift that should be lived and given. There were also interesting questions for reflection like: "How would we describe our consecrated life to others?"

Sister said that our life means to be chosen in a special way for God. And through our vows we can live a life of freedom because chastity is to be detached from everybody, poverty from everything and obedience from myself and so we are open to God's love. We have a great example in Jesus, who was obedient until his death on a cross. This is the love that pushes us to continue and He is our purpose in life.

We heard also a lot about our charism and at the end we shared what touched us, and how we felt.

We want to thank from our hearts sisters from the general administration for this opportunity, to learn and to become more aware that we are members of ASC family, which is spread throughout the world. It was also nice to see all the other Junior sisters and to feel connected to them. It's always nice to reconnect with our sisters and share joys of living our charism. May God continue to follow us and instruct us in our daily lives.

Sr. Martina Bukarica, ASC
Sr. Biljana Kostić, ASC



Giving Voice and Listening to the Cry of the Earth

In the setting of the pine forest of the Sanguis Christi Cittadella in Trani, on Saturday, September 24, 2022, there was an evening of music by Father Mimmo Iervolino, singer-songwriter and parish priest in Pomigliano d'Arco (NA), with the participation of youth and adults.

It was an opportunity to reflect together on the themes of integral ecology promoted by Pope Francis and animated by the Laudato Si' Movement, which the Neapolitan priest carries out in his parish experience. It was precisely during the course for animators of the "Movement" that he says his new musical production was conceived: "The national coordinator pushed me to once again pick up the guitar I had hung up. And he enticed me to go back to music because he told me 'you have this talent and you have to do something about it because the Lord will reward you for it later.' In the parish they already asked me to write a song for our Laudato si' circle in Pomigliano d'Arco. And so the lyrics were born to "Si sta terra," a song in the Neapolitan dialect. The bishop of Acerra (Msgr. Antonio Di Donna) liked it so much that he now uses it as the theme song for all his meetings. So, one after another, the other songs, seven of which were unpublished, also came out, dealing with social issues."

The evening drew its title from his latest album "The Cry of the Earth," which was created to give voice to the earth, to the poor, to the forgotten of this world, with songs that speak about issues such as war, climate change, poverty, "bad politics," our Holy Mother Church torn apart by "divisive stings,"... Alternating between music and testimonies, accompanied by videos with evocative images that served as a backdrop to the lyrics of the songs, the 7 goals of Laudato Si were retraced, conveying passion and concern for "our Common Home" that unfortunately we still do not all recognize and respect.

At the end of the evening, Father Mimmo Iervolino had us listen to the hymn he composed and chose for this period dedicated to Creation Time, whose theme is precisely "Listen to the Voice of Creation," symbolized by the image of the Burning Bush.

Fire that does not consume the essence of

every person. You show up in creation in all beauty, speaking and crying out to You.... Let us take off our shoes before so much love. There is only to listen to the beautiful, the good, the true, that is within us and without.... You are Love, In a man who climbs the slope, In a woman who makes life win, In a star that bursts with light, In forgiveness that costs pain.

Sr. Liana Campanelli, ASC



General Administration Calendar



November 8: Conclusion of the Canonical Visitation in Brazil

November 11-13: Sisters Nadia and Bridget are in Schaan to accompany the Election Assembly

November 14: 1st online meeting of the Commission for the Protection of Minors and Vulnerable Adults

November 20: Sisters Nadia and Matija leave for the Canonical Visitation in Korea

November 28 – December 5: Sister Elsie accompanies the seminar organized by CIS for sisters at the Regional/Foundation/Mission levels engaged in the ministry of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC).



Best wishes and blessings
to the new administration
of the **Schaan** Delegation!

Birthdays: Let's Celebrate Life

30th Birthday

Sr. Maria Elias Malele 11/11/1992 Tanzania

Sr. Rosemary Elias Malele 11/11/1992 Tanzania

50th Birthday

Sr. Martina Marco Hema 11/11/1972 Tanzania



October 21, 2022
Sr. Florentia Riebel
106th Birthday



**They have returned
to their Heavenly
Home**

10/28/2022

Sr. Catherine Wellinghoff

USA

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