

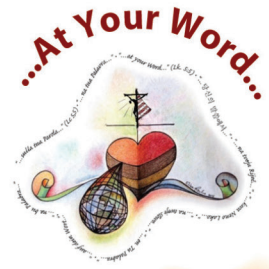
International Newsletter

Adorers of the Blood of Christ

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My Christmas Present

Editorial

I confess that I am pretty upset. During Christmas Mass, instead of welcoming the gift of the Child that is born in that dark and battered cave of my heart, I kept thinking about daily affairs: work deadlines, friends and family. How annoying!

“Focus, focus!” – Nothing. After Mass, I would eat dinner with the Congregation of the Precious Blood. My dear little sisters who, when I was alone and really down, came to get me and welcome me among them. My family. Spending Christmas with them was the most natural way I could think of to spend the Feastday. “But exactly here, today, why can’t you feel anything? Focus! Focus!” Nothing.

When the celebration was finished, I went downstairs to the kitchen to ask if they could use a hand. Sr. Nadia, who had taken over the kitchen for the occasion – usually the reign of Sr Ania – was busy frying olives from Ascoli. Well aware of my poor culinary skills, she put me to work garnishing the fruit. In the meantime, Sister Magdalena was busy arranging the food on the carts. Everything was then ready.

I looked into the dining room: the tables, decorated in red, are arranged in the shape of a horseshoe, creating a huge arc decorated for a feast. A small Christmas star towered over each table and by each place there was a gift of a torrone (nougat candy), left there by Sr. Teresina, I would bet! Behind this large table arrangement,

my gaze rested on a nativity scene that had been meticulously set up down to the smallest detail by Sr. Rani and Sr. Deepa, who were turning on the lights at that moment. On the other side, a huge Christmas tree warmed up the entire atmosphere.

Here we go. All the others randomly arrived: Sister Maria Grazia, Sister Bridget, Sister Patrizia, Sr. Monica. Ana Marija jokingly asked me what happened to me. Finally Sr. Loreta arrived; she had been held up in Church putting everything away. I took a place next to Sr. Ljubica to find out the latest updates about her studies. Everyone was there, yet one table, the last one on the left, was still empty.

Suddenly a little girl peeked in the doorway. She must have been about 5 or 6 years old. She was wearing a red sweater and her hair was pulled back in two braids. She wore a headband with some small reindeer antlers. She smiled at everyone and ran and gave Sr. Nadia and Sr. Rani a hug. Her mom and dad came in behind her with three other children: a little boy about the same age as his sister, but more shy, who wouldn’t let go of his mom’s hand; another younger brother with a disability who was pushed in a stroller by his daddy; and finally a newborn girl who couldn’t have been more than a week old. The baby was dressed in a tiny Santa Claus outfit, complete with little hat.

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They are a Syrian refugee family whom the congregation has been hosting for a few months in an apartment within the convent. It was the first time I met them.

I looked at them, enchanted. The girl with the red sweater and brown braids bounced around, perfectly at ease. Her timid brother sat next to his mother, furtively watching everyone. The little boy in the stroller looked around as his father settled him next to him and checked that he was in a comfortable position. The newborn was immediately welcomed into the arms of all these marvelous aunts and smothered with cuddles.

Bewildered, I felt tears stinging my eyes. There was no reason, or perhaps there are many reasons. The family is serene, and I didn't understand if this fact clashed terribly with my sudden emotion, or on the contrary, explained it perfectly. I looked away. All we needed was my crying for no reason at such a beautiful, heart-felt moment!

Yet, as we were eating and joking, as we were clapping for Sr. Nadia dressed like Santa Claus as she handed out gifts to everyone with the unparalleled help of Sr. Rani, a part of me continued to wonder why I was feeling heartbroken and searched for the reason. Even now, almost a week later, I still have not found the reason. I only know that, through that emotion, I received a very great grace.

It was my Christmas gift: a new face transformed the discomfort I had felt during the celebration. I received a loving gift, which revealed a certain sense of humor those traitorous tears in response to my annoyance at not having fully "felt" the coming of the Child into the world.

- Where are you looking, you big dope? It is as if the Father were saying to me as he gave me his wacky gift – Here he is. Here is the Child. With a red sweater and brown braids, prancing among the nuns perfectly at ease. Dressed in a tiny Santa Claus outfit, cuddled in the arms of those asking to hold her. Shy and holding onto his mother's sleeve: Offering his frailties to the care and love of his daddy.

As is often the case with me, I was looking in the wrong place, in the wrong way. After all, I didn't need to do anything other than look up at the moment a little girl was peeking into the room.

Federica Pazzelli



Online ASC & CPPS Associates' International Meeting



At 1:00 p.m. (Rome time) on Saturday, December 18, a zoom meeting organized by the ASC General Administration and the CPPS General Curia was held to gather all the representatives from around the world of the associates of the spirituality of the Blood of Christ from both congregations. There were 56 associates from the various continents. The meeting, with translation service in five languages, was opened with greetings by Father Emanuele Lupi, CPPS General Moderator, and Sr. Nadia Coppa, ASC General Superior. Father Emanuele recalled the journey of the CPPS Missionaries' associates that led, after many years of MERLAP (International Meeting of Precious Blood Lay Associates), to the need of thinking of new ways of meeting and collaborating.

Sr. Nadia reiterated the importance of the Church's call to walk together, looking for new ways for being a missionary presence, a family of the Precious Blood in the world. Through proclaiming and sharing "the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anguishes of humanity" (GS 1) we express the synodal nature of what we are: the people of God humbly journeying through history, following in the footsteps of the Lamb.

The proceedings, moderated by Father Alois Schlacter, CPPS, opened with a prayer led by Sr. Wiesława Przybyło. Sr. Maria Grazia prepared and coordinated the meeting in collaboration with the technical assistance of Sr. Therese Raad for translation and group work.

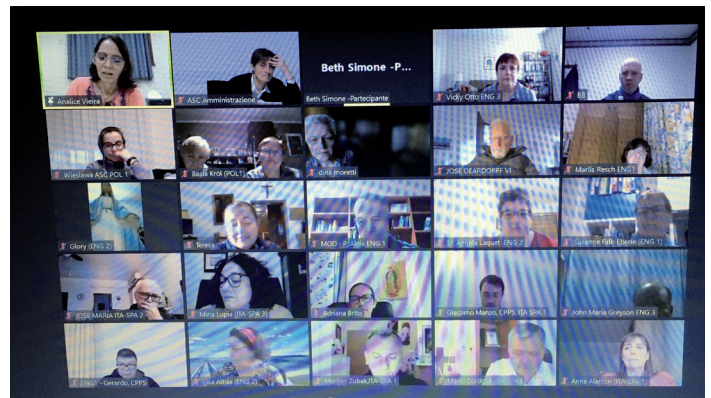
The meeting was enriched by the

participation of Dr. Donatella Acerbi, President of the Union of the Catholic Apostolate. Donatella shared the experience of her charismatic family and encouraged a path of growth together in the richness of diversity. The meeting concluded at 5:00 p.m. with everyone being satisfied, as this experience allowed them to meet and share their dreams and passion for growth in the spirituality of the Blood of Christ to then transmit it to the entire world.

Aware of being a strength and great resource in the Church for the world, the associates expressed during the assembly sharing their desire for systematic, ongoing formation respecting the diversities in order to strengthen their charismatic identity and be contagious, attractive and capable of generating new vocations in the Church. The possibility of being organized in a body, like a branch of the same tree, where each has its own place, allows collaboration, and integration in diversity of the vocations and makes our affiliation visible.

Albertini's and Gaspar's dream is still relevant today, since only by being strengthened in unity, in the sign of communion, can we be the fruitful seed of the Blood of Christ in the world today.

Sr. Maria Grazia Boccamazzo, ASC



Mass of Thanksgiving for the 15 Years of ASC Presence in Mafuiane

On the occasion of the 15 years of ASC presence in Mozambique, the parish community of St. Frumenzio celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving. The event was an opportunity to encourage the faithful of the community to return to the parish, since they had stopped attending due to the coronavirus. Two weeks before the celebration of thanksgiving, the Sisters visited all the families of the neighborhoods, all the people they knew and had come into contact with in order to remind them of our Charism, which is love for God and love for our neighbor, especially for those who have experienced rejection, being marginalized, or even being abandoned.

The celebrations began on Sunday, November 7, 2021 after the 8:00 mass celebrated by Father Artur Vasco Chipera, from the Maputo Diocese. The faithful and others witnessed as to how each had been touched by the charism of St. Maria De Mattias and the mission the sisters carry out among them. Twelve people gave witness: a nurse from a nearby health center shared about the rescuing of triplets, thanks to the prayers of the Sisters who took care of them in collaboration with the nurse.

A family witnessed about the reconciliation of their marriage when their financial situation was very difficult and they had nothing. But following the advice of the Sisters they were able to get their finances back in good condition and they said they owed it all to the help and prayers of the Sisters. This brother who shared about the reconciliation of his marriage promised to visit Tanzania, and in addition was also able to go to the Casa Madre in Italy to venerate the relics of St. Maria De Mattias.

The young people performed and the children and women danced. There was also witnessing by people with family problems and who, with the help of the Sisters, were able to find peace and reconciliation in their lives as couples. They expressed gratitude to God for the graces granted them through the intercession of St. Maria De Mattias.

On November 12, 2021 we gave a seminar on St. Maria De Mattias and the gift of our congregation to make the Foundress and our congregation better known. The following day Father Arthur Vasco Chipera led a retreat to prepare everyone for the Eucharistic Celebration of Thanksgiving.

On November 12, the Holy Mass began at 8:30 in

a spirit of joy and jubilee and our hearts were filled with gratitude to God. We celebrated the Mass of St. Maria De Mattias to thank God for the great works God silently does in the people we serve.

After Mass, the faithful had prepared food and beverages for all the parishioners and others gathered for the occasion, even those of other faiths. Everyone ate and shared in fraternity. At the end of the celebration gifts were distributed.

With this simple sharing we want to express our gratitude for God's goodness and protection wherever the Congregation carries out its mission: proclaiming Christ who shed his Blood for the salvation of everyone.

We thank our ASC sisters of Tanzania who united with us in prayer during the novena.

***Sr. Flaviana Alfred, ASC
Mafuiane – Mozambique***



Praying for the Dead, Virtually



The tradition of our faith that encourages us to visit a cemetery and pray for the dead on or around All Souls Day posed the question: How do you do this if you are restricted by health, distance or Covid, and are in a nursing home?

This question plagued me as I looked ahead to the feasts of All Saints and All Souls. Somewhere in the process of prayer and wonder the thought developed. Why not bring the graves to the residents via a PowerPoint slide show? Covid had forced us to use technology in so many ways over the last months, maybe it would provide us with one more way to connect people with their past and allow us a way to pray for our relatives who had died.

Early in October, I began visiting with the residents of St. Joseph's Villa in David City, Nebraska, and asking about their family history. Slowly, I gathered bits and pieces of information about their spouses, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren and siblings who had died. Some names already had faded into the past but enough information was gathered to begin the search. The website, "Find a Grave" provided pictures of the cemetery and gravestones and other

information about relatives buried in each cemetery. Slowly, the PowerPoint took shape, as each gravesite picture was paired with a bead of the rosary.

On All Souls Day, a large group of residents gathered for prayer in the dining room around a large computer screen. With each prayer of the rosary, a new slide appeared on the screen, asking all to pray for the loved one of one of the residents.

Each slide included either a picture of the deceased or a photo of the tombstone of the person we were remembering. During our prayer time, one could hear tearful responses and moments of silent remembering from the residents. It truly was a moment of grace for all.

After prayer, we continued sharing special memories of loved ones. Some of the residents asked about the graves of other members of their family.

We thank God for these memories and for the technology that can transport us virtually over the miles.

Sr. Frances Pytlik, ASC

Our Teacher, Joseph

As we look at all of the versions of the Christmas narrative, Joseph is rather quiet. Joseph was not a man of many words, but his actions spoke volumes. Joseph the carpenter, Joseph the listener, Joseph the dreamer, Joseph the protector, Joseph the father, Joseph the breadwinner, Joseph the loving husband. Which actions of Joseph teach us how to live?

We know next to nothing about Joseph except through his relationship to Mary. He was likely a deeply faithful man, steeped in the Jewish traditions. His trust in God, as demonstrated by his responses to sacred dreams, was cultivated through his prayer life. He seemed to be a tender-hearted man, not wanting to cause any public scandal for Mary, or himself, when he discovered that Mary was pregnant. Humbly, he listened to God, as revealed in his dreams, and brought Mary into his home.

Their dangerous, yet required trip to Bethlehem was a leap of faith for him, given Mary's advanced pregnancy. He needed to trust that God would provide, and that he, himself, could protect Mary sufficiently. Can we imagine his disappointment at not having access to a well-built home for the birth? He likely prayed that God would provide a place, and a very humble cave was made available for them. Joseph must have been in awe of the miracle of birth, as

he held Jesus in his arms for the first time. What did Joseph think about the many visitors who came to see Jesus, accompanied by stories of angels singing on high, and stars leading the way? He probably wondered what he had agreed to, by taking Mary as his wife! Joseph's dreams guided him to take Jesus to Egypt. The angel told him, "No time to pack, let go. Trust!" Herod's cruelty was avoided. Angelic dreams again instructed Joseph to return to Nazareth at the appointed time. His faith guided him throughout his life.

One lesson that we learn from Joseph is to remain faithful, no matter in what circumstances we find ourselves. Another lesson is to pay attention to God's guidance in our lives, through our dreams, the still voice within, or from others, and then to act on it.

We learn to protect one another at our most vulnerable moments, to be tender-hearted with others, especially if we don't understand their circumstances. We are to be patient and wait for the right moment to move, and God will help us know when that time comes. Stay Awake! Be Ready!



Sr. Angela Laquet, ASC

Missionary Center in the ASC Retirement Home



On November 7, 2021 we inaugurated the Missionary Center in our retirement home. We are talking about the Regina Pacis Institute of Ceglie del Campo (BA), which was severely tested during the third wave of Covid-19.

As a sign of rebirth and beginning anew, we created a missionary center next to our older sisters where we keep our passion alive for all people of every color, race and religion and where we pray for the entire world in need of redemption. Two ASCs and some volunteers will work in the Missionary Center. A permanent display of handcrafts was set up and some photo displays.

The ASCs will be able to contribute by their handcrafts such as knitted doilies, crochet and bead works, and handcrafted cards, etc.

During the long lockdown, Sr. Donata Pepe reinvented herself by transforming the rooms where she lived into creativity workshops. Paintings

on fabric and ceramics, making pearl bracelets and necklaces, handcrafts, rosaries, accessories for little girls, etc. Instead of being despondent and letting herself be overcome by the historical moment, she knew how to make use of the preciousness of the time and hours, multiplying them in creativity for the good of her dear neighbor.

That afternoon, in the presence of the ASCs from nearby houses, the Pastors of Ceglie and Bari Madugno, Sister Nicla Spezzati and the President of MediHospice, Dr. Camillo Aceto, the Center was inaugurated with a brief time of prayer and some songs prepared by the ASC Associates.

The older ASC of Celie del Campo will continue to be missionaries to the end, making room in their hearts for every human poverty of this great continent of ours.

Sr. Milena Marangoni, ASC

Christmas

Once upon a time there was a guy who didn't believe in "Christmas." ...

The years passed relentlessly ... but for him there was nothing. ... Halfway through December he noticed everyone was caught up in the frenzy of shopping, decorating, strings of colored lights lighting up the streets of the city. ... He thought to himself ... what a waste of resources, not to speak of money....

When he was past middle age ... he was against all holidays....

By chance, one day at the supermarket he met a dignified and smiling retired man at the fish counter who brightly asked for a half kilo of cod. The fishmonger immediately took him aback saying, "Sir, with a half kilo of raw fish, you won't find anything after it is fried!"

The retired gentleman diplomatically replied, "I respect and love the traditions of my life.

I am now alone, but the joy and expectation of Christmas for me is still endless....

Of course, if I had a friend to celebrate with, I would buy a whole kilo, you know,

I wouldn't want to exaggerate.... The guy turned around with great admiration and said to him... "you know, for my whole life, I certainly haven't looked at tradition..

I am also alone, perhaps this is the reason..."

Then with a thundering voice, the retiree looked at the fishmonger saying,

"Please give me a kilo of the best St. John's cod, because beginning this year, this gentleman will be at my table and Christmas will be a ritual for us because both he and I have finally found a 'dear friend.'"

Sonia Battistelli

Mystery of the Incarnation

The door is open
To the inside, to the outside
Do I go in or do I go out?
Am I a guest for myself -
Or do I seek to be let in
To finally arrive?
Do I open myself? Just a crack, so that the light falls in?
Or do I close myself, make gates and doors tight?

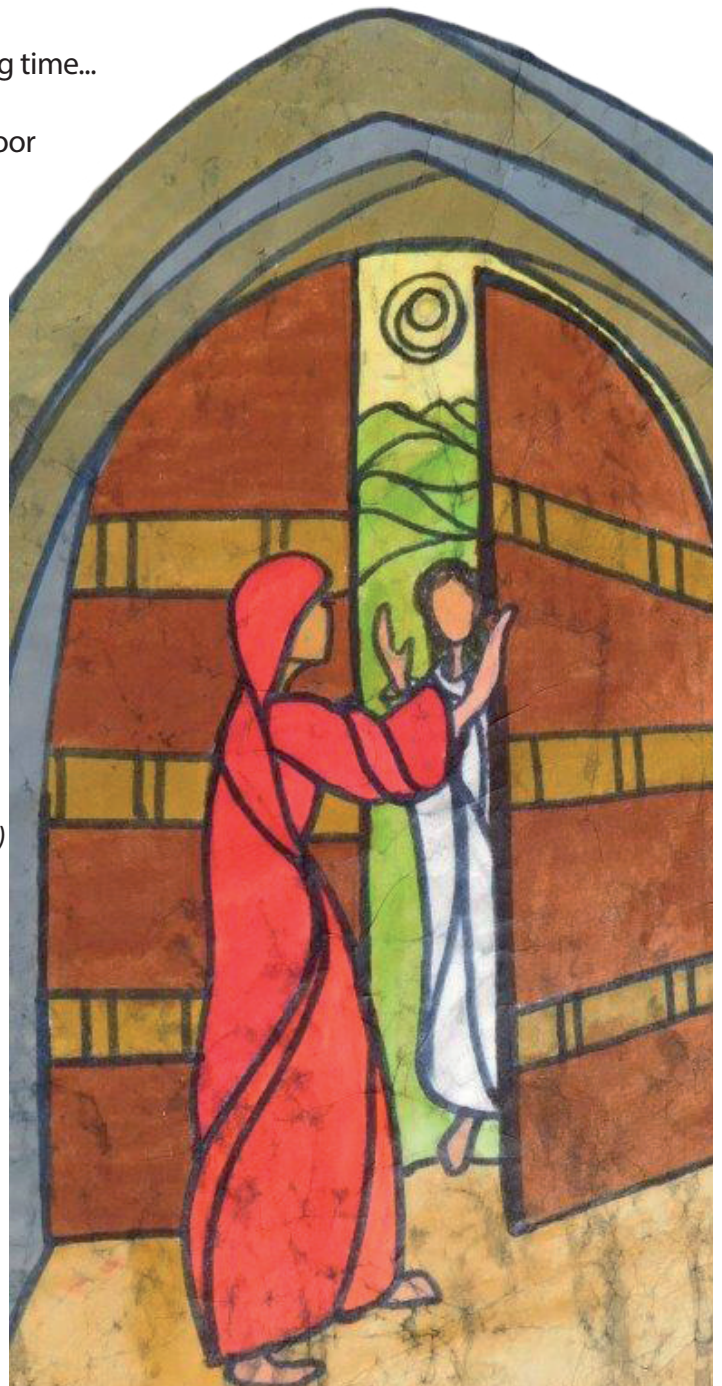
... Yes, if it were that person
from my immediate environment
A person with whom I have a hard time -
if I opened my heart to him, of all people, after a long time...

And if it were so, that this someone in front of the door
The guest who greets me so kindly here
is Jesus himself?
Would I then let him pass by?

I would miss the arrival of heaven!
HIM, who wants to show me the way to heaven.

The way to heaven?
.... passes through my heart.
The sun may still be so tempting
The meek hills outside the gate
Still shine so full of promise.
Would I not invite heaven in
And the heart of a simple man
Would not be crossed by him -
All would be in vain!

(Julia Hepperle, ASC Associate in the Region of Schaan)



General Administration Calendar



January 3: Sr. Nadia and council make their canonical visitation in the community of Cesena, Italy (Region of Tanzania)

January 11: Sr. Nadia attends the UISG assembly of the Rome constellation

January 15: Sr. Wiesława and Sr. Maria Grazia participate in an online meeting with the ASC-CPPS Associates commission

Birthdays: Let's Celebrate Life

30th birthday

Sr. Victória M. Mangal 01/02/1992 Guinea

40th birthday

Sr. Sara Angélica Sandoaval Palácios 01/04/1982 Manaus

60th birthday

Sr. Christina Phidelis Machiya 01/30/1962 Tanzania

70th birthday

Sr. Giuseppina Di Niro 01/24/1952 Italy

Sr. Mirjam Kuštreba 01/25/1952 Zagreb

Sr. Bruna Menichelli 01/25/1952 Italy

Sr. Mary Vadakumcherry 01/27/1952 India

80th birthday

Sr. Angela Appugliese 01/01/1942 Italy

Sr. Marta Jurasik 01/08/1942 Wrocław

Sr. Darlene Stoecklein 01/09/1942 USA

Sr. Janina Sygut 01/19/1942 Wrocław



They have returned to their Heavenly Home

- 12/05/2021 **Sr. Katarina Vujeva** Zagreb
- 12/07/2021 **Sr. Celeste Odorizzi** USA
- 12/28/2021 **Sr. Elżbieta Bukis** Wrocław
- 12/31/2021 **Sr. Assunta Mansillo** Italy

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...At Your Word...
Lorena Pires

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