

Interconnections

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Here in Rome

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The long, hot Roman summer has come to an end. At the Generalate we watched the grass browning, the roses shrivelling, and the earth cracking. Our wells were dry or not deep enough to pump water for

trees or plants. We suffered the long agony of waiting for rain that is a common experience in the chronically drought-stricken areas of the world. But here, at least, we had always sufficient water for domestic purposes. We had only to turn on a tap



Part of our wasteland

if we wanted to drink or shower and we were not depending on what grows in our garden to feed our animals or ourselves.

Perhaps the cry of the psalmist,

"God, you are my God, I pine for you;
my heart thirsts for you,
my body longs for you,
as a land parched, dreary and waterless. (Ps. 63, 1)

took on deeper meaning for some of us this year.

Our Itinerant Administration

Scarcely had some members of the General Community returned from vacation than they were on their travels again – Genevieve to the Philippines and Margaret and Hyacinth to India. From early September, however, they were all together as preparations for the Latin American visits and Continental Meeting intensified (cf. Planning, August- December 2003). By the 21st all had left.

They were followed on the 27th by the back-up team of secretaries and translators. They include Mary Loughran, Mercedes Mendiguchia and Carmen Leach from the support community of the Generalate, Teresa Cabo of the Italian Province and Marie Sheridan from Britain and Ireland.

Departures

■ Bonaventine Bastian who has been in Rome since January 1994 is to leave us on 15 October to return to her Province of origin, Jaffna. Best known as Bonnie, she has been an active, creative, outgoing member of the community, qualities she also brought to her special task as secretary for the countries of Asia.

She is well known among the Sri Lankan community in Rome for her pastoral assistance to them and was even in demand to go to Palermo each Easter to minister to her compatriots there. Her sisters and friends will miss

her lively presence as they accompany her with their prayer and good wishes for her future ministry.



■ Luisa Crisci, who was a member of the community for the past year, has returned to the Italian Province. Our gratitude and prayer go with her for her work and presence among us.

A not-so-recent arrival

Pouvana Thuraisamy, from the Province of Jaffna, was welcomed by the Generalate community in February 2003. She has come to work in the secretariat. Most of the time since her arrival has been spent learning French in Rome, France and Belgium.

A clarion call to Interaction in this Centenary Year

In her letter for the centenary of the Approbation of our Constitutions Margaret raises many questions, both implicit and explicit. The letter and the outline of our *Holy Family* story both provide abundant food for prayer, reflection, and eventual action. But can all this food be properly digested by individuals on their own? Sharing food together is the oldest form of communion. If we are to be truly people of communion, as our Charism insists we should be, do we not need to share the food of our common heritage with one another?

To quote from Margaret's letter:

"Although it is almost impossible to have clear and definite answers to the many questions that surface within us and around us, I think we all recognise that it is important that we keep asking questions and that we share them with one another."
(p. 5 #2)

The International ComInfo Service would like to offer you the means to share the dishes of the common meal with as many sisters as possible, even when they are only half-baked. It is through interaction that they will become fully cooked. Do please send them as soon as they materialise by any means you choose.

As messages come in and they may be in any form - further questions, insights, challenges, comments, stories - they can be re-diffused by e-mail or via our website. An effort will be made to translate everything into the three official languages so do try to keep contributions brief. On the website a Forum page has been added with a form you can use to post messages. To show you how it works a text in each language, taken at random from local bulletins, has been posted.

Breaking news

Celebrating 18 December 2003 in Rome

A request by the General Community for permission to have a *Holy Family* Eucharistic celebration in St. Peter's Basilica at the tomb of the Apostle on 18 December this year has been granted. A special papal blessing has also been solicited for the occasion.



AFRICA

Cameroon-Chad

A 'First' Perpetual Profession

A first event of its kind, especially when it is a joyful one, deserves special mention. Such an event was the final profession of the first African sister of the Cameroon-Chad Delegation, Solange Graka. It took place on 3 May 2003 in the Holy Family parish of Mokolo Tada in the Diocese of Maroua-Mokolo. Juliana Larraya hfb recorded the celebration for us.

Solange had prepared long and fervently for this final commitment. Part of the time she had spent in the D.R. Congo where she came "to realise the importance of her total, free, spontaneous gift of self to the Lord, growing in the certitude that it was He who called her". The words, "Put out into deep water... I am with you (Lk. 5, 4) echoed throughout the ceremony.

As the time drew near, the sisters of the Delegation joined with Solange in praying the prayer to the Holy Family composed by our Founder, asking him to keep them faithful to the spirit that animated the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

A Parish Event

The parish priest, Fr. Krzysztof Zielanda O.M.I., coordinated the efforts of all the groups and

people of good will in the parish to see that the feast was a success. There were the management committee, the choir, the leaders of the various movements and sodalities, the catechists, the Holy Family novices with the local youth. All were involved in one way or another. The food and drink had to be prepared, the site had to be decorated. Above all, the liturgy had to be prepared. This was in the hands of Pauline Manzueto hfb who left nothing to chance.

Thirty members of Solange's family, including her parents, arrived the day before. It was a delightful family gathering, a real alliance between the Holy Family and the Graka family who played a very meaningful role in the ceremony of the following day.

The Day of Commitment

As Solange is from his diocese, the bishop of Pala in Chad, Jean-Claude Bouchard, had agreed to preside at the celebration. At 9 a.m. the ceremony began as an impressive procession headed by the cross bearer, followed by the Children of Mary, the Holy Family pre-novices and novices, the sisters accompanying Solange, the altar servers, many priests and the bishop, entered the church and were welcomed by the assembled congregation.

The Eucharistic celebration unfolded as we know it but animated with all the lively, joyful dancing and music associated



with Africa. During the readings, litanies and dialogues three languages were heard: French, Mafa and Fulfuldé.

A traditional rite, common in many African countries with local variations, was performed. When a girl marries and leaves her parental home she is accompanied by all the family members who bless her, give her good advice and offer her to her husband. In this case her parents present her with a bag woven from pearls containing the object that will be most precious for her future life. Solange's bag contained a bible. This and other symbols given to the woman also signify the importance of her husband. As Solange's father said: "What greater husband could one have than Christ?"

When all the rites had been performed and Solange had expressed her desire to commit herself entirely to God and the religious family she had chosen all the Holy Family sisters, carrying candles, accompanied her in procession, as a sign of her integration into the Family. They all renewed their own commitment to God in the Religious Institute.



The sisters of the community of Sir have reason to remember this year's Cameroon National Youth Day held on 11 February. Most of the young people in the immediate area had gone to the celebration with their friends.

At about 1.30 p.m. a strong wind arose. Shortly after, the two sisters who were in the house heard a strange noise outside followed soon after by cries of alarm.

When they went out to see what was happening they saw their compound was on fire. Four huts were burning while a crowd of women and children

and four men were converging on the spot with buckets of water to douse the flames.

Fortunately the sisters' cook noticed that the trees close to the roof of their house were burning. Seeing the danger he raised the alarm and even risked his life by climbing on the roof to put out the fire. The house was saved by his prompt action.

The sisters were extremely touched at the sight of the Muslim women coming to their aid. Together they managed to put out the fire but the contents

of four huts and their thatched roofs were destroyed.

No one was injured, however. The exact cause of the fire is unknown but it seems to have begun in the woodpile behind the huts.

On the days following people came to offer their condolences and encouragement. The sisters were overwhelmed by their response and sympathy. The accident showed them God's protecting hand over them as well as the quality of their relationships with the people. Their thanks go to God for this abiding presence in their lives and to the people of Sir for their solidarity.

Brief News from the three Communities

Botswana

From our correspondent, Rajeswary Velautham



The community is complete

Brigitte Nziata from the D.R.Congo, whose departure for Botswana was delayed for lack of a visa, has now joined the community in Masunga.

Celebrations

On the feast of the Blessed Trinity the presiding priest invited one of the sisters to explain the importance of this feast for the *Holy Family*. Rathini Keethaponkalan was happy to do so.

When the feast of Corpus Christi came round all the Catholics of Masunga, including its outstations, came to celebrate. Although only a small group, the sisters thought they were admirable in the way

they participated. They had also invited people who belong to other churches to join them. After Mass those from the different denominations and sects shared their grace experiences with the Catholics. At a brief entertainment afterwards the visitors welcomed the sisters who, in turn, introduced themselves. They people presented them with gifts such as cutlery and plates which they appreciated very much.

Initial difficulties -They include a shortage of water and learning to communicate.

Water is very scarce in Masunga and sometimes the sisters have to go without it for a few days.

Kalanga is the language they have to learn to communicate with the people in their immediate vicinity. It is not easy as there is not much written material.

In Church people come from different areas so the language used is Setswana. In spite of the language barrier the sisters have started going out for prayer services with their two priests.

Rwanda

From Rushaki

◆ The community is eagerly awaiting the arrival of Clementine Sekantsi, a young sister from Lesotho, who is soon to join them. Clementine has spent several months in Bordeaux learning French .

◆ Another joyful piece of news is that two young women, Odette and Immaculée, have asked to begin the pre-novitiate stage of formation. A third who is working with the sisters at the Social Centre will begin the contact stage.

◆ Next October two members of the community, Christine Ibanga and Jacqueline Imbungu, will pursue their studies at Kigali the better to serve the many sick of the region.

◆ The communities of Rwanda and Uganda come together frequently. They find this source of joy and mutual support for their common mission.

We have all followed the recent presidential elections in the country and are aware of the controversy surrounding them. We pray that true democracy will nevertheless prevail.

Uganda

War in the North

The war in the North is escalating. There are daily reports in the newspaper about the ambushes on villages and refugee camps. The old are killed and the children are abducted. The church has spoken out but it appears that the Ugandan army does not want to talk peace. Instead, they keep saying they are going to kill Joseph Kony, the rebel leader.

The Acholi people are caught between the national army and the Lord's Liberation Army (LRA). Sally Fiore hfb, our reporter, again asks us to pray for both the army and the Acholi people as there is an undercurrent of non-acceptance on tribal grounds.



The work of our hands...

The people of the North do not accept President Museveni as he is from the West.

Ordinations in Kabale Diocese

The new bishop of Kabale, Callistus Rubaramire, has ordained 6 priests in his diocese: one diocesan priest, three Apostles of Jesus, one Jesuit, and one Missionary of Africa.

Ongoing pastoral programmes

The Buhara Health Unit and Buhara Primary school have worked together to open a Day Care Centre in the Parish Hall.

It is trying to integrate disabled and normal children under school-going age and prepare them for formal education.

South Africa

A Province-Community Meeting

“Small is beautiful.” In South Africa this means that it is possible for the 61 sisters (statistics 2002) of the Province to meet as a community. This year’s meeting was held in Pietermaritzburg (30 June-4 July) where many of the elderly and infirm sisters who are unable to travel are housed. Holding the meeting there meant that the wisdom and experience of the seniors could be tapped into and they, for their part, could play an active role in the reflections and planning for the future of the Province.

Life-giving energy

The energy and creativity of the communities were evident in their liturgies highlighting the themes of the day as well as their participation

throughout. It was a time to diffuse the spirit and life of the African Continental Meeting held in January while focusing in particular on the South African scene. The resolutions from the larger meeting around Leadership, Inculturation and Basic Formation provided material for reflection at provincial level. Then, it would be the task of the communities and individuals to apply it in a meaningful way to their own local situations.

They looked closely at their structures, reminding themselves that “participation is an important aspect of relational leadership”. The teams for Communications and Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation are specially mandated to keep up the flow of energy in the Province.

Their consciousness of belonging to a much wider family than one of Apostolic sisters took on new meaning and they saw the *Holy Family’s* potential for global impact. The meeting also worked on the Lay Associates’ apostolic potential.

Present Calls

At the end of the meeting, nourished by the food of prayer, enthusiasm and desire for renewal as “women on mission together in South Africa”, they were able to hear the calls to attend to:

- ◆ leadership practice
- ◆ building of communion/relationships in community
- ◆ researching a specific focus for Mission, e.g. action and pastoral care in the area of HIV/Aids.

Pastoral Care of Vocations

Vocations Sunday (18 May 2003) was marked nationwide in South Africa. In Durban two *Holy Family* sisters, Jacquie and Marion got together to plan the day and organise a long term plan. They used the parish bulletin to build up to the occasion by inserting snippets each week giving information about religious life and the priesthood.

On the day itself they invited the participation of

Holy Family Associates, Seminarians, and Dominican Sisters. A brochure with relevant information was handed out. *Holy Family* sisters spoke at all the Masses. Afterwards the congregation was invited to come and see a *Holy Family* Stall. A few young women expressed interest and eight people asked if they could join the Associates.

Follow-up

To involve the parish community in the vocations



effort a prayer chain will be formed to pray for those who expressed interest. A family will commit itself during Mass to pray for a week and then the following week another family will take over the prayer chain. The sisters have committed themselves to be available to discern with anyone who may feel called.



AMERICAS



A better political future for Latin America?

taking steps to expose the killing, torture or other abuse of thousands of their compatriots by right-wing dictators from the 1960s to the 1980s.

In August, pushed by the new President Nestor Kirchner, Argentina's senate voted overwhelmingly to revoke amnesty laws passed in 1986 and 1987 to protect generals and their henchmen from prosecution. Anywhere from 9000 to 30 000 Argentineans were killed or "disappeared" during successive dictatorships from 1976 to 1983. Kirchner himself was briefly detained by the dictatorship while in college and promised in his inaugural address on 25 May to settle unanswered questions in his country's dark past.

Next door in Brazil, President Lula da Silva was among those imprisoned for union and opposition activities in the 1964 to 1985 era when military dictators ruled. His government launched a revamped commission into political disappearances on 14 August with orders to be more aggressive in getting at the truth.

Some of the most publicised human rights initiatives have been in Chile where efforts to try Pinochet on charges of masterminding a campaign of torture and political murder drew worldwide headlines in 2000 and 2001. He escaped trial on grounds of age and health but President Ricardo Lagos, the first socialist

The new left-liberal presidents of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay are

(Continued on page 9)

Argentina

Woman Power

Hilda Canteros hfb of the community of Montecarlo accompanies a group of women volunteers working with the parish Caritas. The women themselves describe the projects they were able to realise with her help:

- The pitcher of milk that has greatly helped the children who are undernourished;
- Accompaniment of the families in their human and spiritual growth, with whom sister meets once a month;
- The new Caritas parish building which was put up with the help of the bishop who wanted it to be in the community of S. Maria del Iguazú;
- A course on medicinal herbs to introduce alternative medication;
- An excursion to their Patron, Santa Maria del Iguazú, on the theme: "You yourselves give them something to eat", where they presented to the communities the different activities that were being undertaken in their parish for the common good.

(from page 8)

president since Pinochet toppled Salvador Allende in 1973, announced on 12 August that his government would intensify efforts to investigate crimes of the Pinochet era.

In Paraguay, where strongman General Alfredo Stroessner ruled from 1954 to 1989, authorities are also looking back. The new Congress is

taking up a measure to create a Truth and Reconciliation Commission similar to one operating in Chile, whose report has just been published. For the first time in generations the new president, Nicanor Duarte Frutos, inaugurated on 15 August, has no ties to the old dictatorship. Human rights activists hope for new probes into the deaths or disappearances of somewhere

around 30 000 Paraguayans in the Stroessner era.

Revisiting the past has risks for U.S. – Latin American relations. Washington staunchly supported the old, right-wing regimes as Cold War allies or as buffers against Soviet or Cuban expansion. Some of the information sought involves allegations against U.S. officials and policies.

(Adapted from www.paraguay.com Ed.)

Perpetual Profession at the source of her faith

Zulema Frank of the community of Cordoba made her perpetual profession on 12 July 2003. She decided to celebrate it in the chapel of San Juan in Castelli, the village where she was born. It was there she had spent her childhood and adolescence and where the Lord had called her to follow him in the Holy Family. She explains why in her own words.

“There were various reasons but the principal one was my desire to celebrate this step together with those who saw me grow up and who helped me to discover my vocation, the source of my happiness. It seemed to me it would be an opportunity to renew the faith of that Christian community and help it to discover more clearly the presence of God in everyday life. One of my wishes was that all might experience the unconditional love of God in their personal, family and community lives.”

Spiritual preparation with the Christian community

The sisters decided it would be good to organise a short preparation with the people so that they might be able to understand more deeply the meaning of the step Zulema was about to take.

They organised a mission and made house to house visits to all the families in the area. Scarcely had they begun when the priest from the neighbouring village asked them to extend it to his parishioners. They were only eight in number, between sisters, postulants and young people in discernment, but they accepted to go for at least two days.

In the mornings they visited the families two by two. The youngest and more energetic went on foot, others on bicycles and some in a van kindly offered them by a woman in the area. In the evenings the whole community assembled for a celebration on different themes. Distances of several kilometres were no obstacle. No one wanted to miss what they considered to be a grace for the community.

Normally, when the sisters take part in a mission it is almost always in a place of first evangelisation or where the faith has grown cold. In this case it was the reverse. The area had been evangelised by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the *Holy Family* during their years of mission in Castelli. It was lovely to be able to see the fruit of their efforts.

When they visited the homes they enjoyed a warm welcome from families in which God was a special guest, families with a great desire to pray, to learn and to grow in their faith which, they said, is the most important thing in their lives. They continually gave thanks for Zulema's vocation and that she had decided to celebrate her perpetual profession among them, enabling them to witness such an event for the first time.

The special day

Sisters, Associates and friends came from all the communities in Paraguay. Present, too, was the bishop of the diocese, the priests of the parish and religious from other congregations. Present in spirit and through written com-

munication were the Contemplative sisters and many in Spain

All agreed that the highlight of the celebration was the Eucharist. The symbolic breaking of a clay pot at the penitential rite to signify our

divisions and the homily were two very moving moments, says Zulema. Indeed many people who came to say thanks in the days that followed said how much the Mass, and especially the homily, had meant to them. There can be no doubt that the choice of place was a happy one.

Brazil

Restoring dignity to the homeless of Santo Amaro

From Brazil, Geni Camargo hfb tells of the plight of the homeless in São Paulo and the efforts being made by various organisations and churches to help them. There are about ten thousand people living in the streets of the city. They form a sub-culture of their own to survive. Among them violence is on the increase and is institutionalised.

Three years ago a group drawn from a number of religious congregations, including the *Holy Family*, and lay movements began to visit the homeless in the Santo Amaro district. Two of the group also belong to the Street Network Association (Associação Rede Rua) that is involved with communication and documentation on the issue.

The work developed and the growing group decided on a name to distinguish its mission. They called it the Bento de Portão Group. Why this name? Bento de Portão is the name of a street dweller who lived at the end of the last century in

the Santo Amaro district and whose tomb, completely covered in messages, is much frequented by people who go to ask, and give thanks, for graces received.

Hope Hostel

In December 2002 the Social Services of São Paulo asked the Association to set up a night hostel giving shelter to about 160 persons. It required a period of discernment to decide whether to accede to the request as it was quite a new departure for the group. They decided to accept the challenge. The Hope Hostel began officially on 29 December. Today it receives an average of 180 men for baths, dinner and morning coffee.

Santo Dias da Silva Centre

At the end of the year 2001 another challenge came. As they evaluated the progress already made, three points emerged:

- ◆ To continue insisting on the need to restore dignity and citizenship;
- ◆ To find alternative ways for social re-insertion;

◆ The need for a method of work that would not merely consist of handouts.

As a result, the Project Santo Dias da Silva was born. Again, why the name? Santo Dias da Silva was a trade union worker who struggled for more just laws during the military regime. He was assassinated in 1979 by the police in front of the factory where he worked. He embodied the spirit of the Centre whose task is to give work, responsibility and independence to the people.

The centre is also a hostel but they do not want to call it that because it is different from other hostels. It has room for 80 men who must be recommended by the Hope Hostel. The criterion for admission is the capacity to overcome the problems facing street people and the desire to grow.

Provisional accommodation

Provisional accommodation or a halfway house is the final step towards leaving the streets. When a man has work,

he can already begin to live independently but often the salary is not sufficient to supply all his needs and, for a time, he needs a place to stay.

There are two houses in Santo Amaro capable of housing 15 people each. The groups are accompanied by a coordinator who visits and holds weekly meetings.

The tenants see to the maintenance and form groups to do the housework. Each one contributes a certain sum monthly towards the expenses. They are all expected to save a little for the future. It is not easy and there are many

obstacles to overcome before they recover their self-esteem and control their drug and alcohol dependence. There are also family problems to be resolved as well as the need to find work. The success rate varies.

People leave the project for different reasons: because they have difficulty adapting and cannot break their drug or drink habits, some return to their families, get work and even marry. It is sometimes necessary to send people away for aggressive behaviour, for criminal acts or for non-participation in the activities of the Centre.

The *Holy Family* dream

The community dreams of a Family where all are sons and daughters of God trying to revive the ideal of the first Christian communities where no one was in need and where communion was possible in love. Being with the homeless, listening to them and getting to know their names and stories, struggling for laws to defend their rights, denouncing injustice, offering ways for them to leave the streets and recover their human potential is a way of living the corporate commitment of the Institute.

Caring for those often forgotten by society

Holy Family sisters, Eliza Calé and Vanda Lana, are members of the community of the *Queen Isabella Shelter* where elderly women, some nearly destitute, are cared for. The women come from every race and religion. Together, the sisters try to form a family as they are all children of the same God.

Life at the centre

The centre is not an isolated place. There are many visitors who come for various reasons, for example, as researchers or volunteers. The visitors are of all ages, beliefs and religions. Already this year different groups have come bringing joy and demonstrating the value and respect old people still enjoy. Youngsters in catechesis or other stages of education come to do a project on the elderly. The latter are happy to be able to give interviews and

help them in their school work. The students often come back to show their results.

Nurturing the creativity of the elderly

The Fraternity Campaign (*Campanha da Fraternidad* or CF) concerns itself with elderly persons. The basic text of the CF has been instrumental in eliminating certain false ideas about them: that they are no longer able to learn, have no ideas or opinions, are near to death, that they ought to associate only with their own age group... Many of the things said about them are common to all ages.

They asked one young woman called Melina Drumont who was doing a CF study on the Elderly how she saw them. She said for her they were people who had lived long and had a great life

experience to transmit to her. They tend nowadays to form the greater part of society and sometimes care for them leaves much to be desired. In families they have a role to play giving love and affection to their grandchildren and caring for them while their parents work.

The sisters mention a young teacher, Vera, who has been coming to the Shelter for a few years now. She teaches drawing, collage, reading and writing. Encouraged by the interest of some of her pupils she also began to teach English.

Understanding this, the community tries to the best of its ability to be a living, caring, hopeful presence for the elderly in their care so that their last years may be happy.

Paraguay

Hope for a different Paraguay

by the Paraguay ComInfo Team

Paraguay finds itself in an attitude of expectation and hope. On various occasions, through the Delegation bulletin Koe'ti, we have denounced the situation of the country where corruption was institutionalised in all areas of society and poverty was on the increase as well as insecurity and violence.

Before the election of Nicanor Duarte Frutos as president everyone was certain that things would continue in the same way. After all, he belonged to the Colorado party that had governed the Paraguayan people so badly during its many years in power. In his presidential speech on 15 August he created great expectations. The programmes for government were encouraging but there was always the doubt that they would remain in the realm of promises.

Outstanding points were:

HONESTY: Up to now it had been absent from the country. From today it will be the distinguishing virtue of the government.

LEGALITY: We are going to establish a government of legality waging strict war on corruption and evasion.

He added: "These changes, I must honestly confess, will not be automatic. We will improve slowly and steadily."

The days went by and he made a good impression. The voice of the experts said he was acting with prudence. A first wise move was to surround himself with suitable people regardless of the political party to which they belonged, something that had counted for much in Paraguay. The people, and especially the opposition politicians, are carefully watching his every action. His position is high in the polls just now.

He is a capable man with a political background. He comes from a humble peasant family and knows what it is to work and struggle for a livelihood from his infancy.

From his first days in power there were indications of change. We know it is not going to be possible to reform everything in the short term. With a new government Paraguay will not change overnight. Employment has to be created, steps taken to pay the external debt and so many other things that plague the country.

All this cannot be done by the government alone. It requires a people who will respond and work for a different Paraguay where all can live with dignity, security and freedom. This attitude of support is already noticeable in many sectors of the population. Our great desire is that our hope will not be frustrated so we ask the Blessed Virgin of Caacupe that the simple people may have the bread and work lacking to so many families.

Ongoing training for Indigenous Teachers

For a year now Juanita Añazco of the Community of Mariscal Estigarribia has been involved with several others in the *Project for Distance Academic Training for Indigenous Teachers* (EADI). The project was drawn up and presented to the Ministry for Education and its proponents are awaiting approbation. In the meantime they have already begun to put it into practice.

Juanita has discovered a new world among the indigenous people. She realises how

important it is to approach them with an open mind, leaving aside one's personal agenda. Their task is to help the teachers to continue their studies. Each month they go to give them lessons face to face. Most of them are middle-aged and motivated to continue their training to improve their teaching. It is not an easy task. They come from different ethnic groups and the lessons are given in Spanish. For those among the learners and teachers who can express themselves in Guaraní there is

less of a problem.

Further projects

The group has drawn up a preliminary plan on the *Law for Indigenous Education*. Some articles of the National Constitution grant the indigenous people their rights but there is a lack of legislation to put them into practice. It is only those who are working directly with these people who can help them because the government is not very interested in them. Let us hope that their efforts succeed.

Youth and Development

In the diocese of Misiones the Pastoral Care of Youth Commission was looking for ways to channel the youth towards some project that would help them to work and earn something to improve their life. Ramona Chappe hfb of the community of San Patricio writes about how she and other sisters were involved in the project called, *Youth missionaries building paths of development*.

A 3-stage Project

The first stage:

An agreement was made with the local government candidates during their electoral campaigns to support the youth. This support meant they had to draw up a budget for the training of youth.

The second stage:

Training in how to start a mini-company. The Pastoral team got this going with *Junior Achinmer*, an NGO (Non governmental organisation) dedicated to organising young entrepreneurs.

The final stage:

Presentation of the file with projects drawn up by the young people on 15 August, when the elected government took office in the department.

That was how training in mini-enterprises was started. In San Patricio the young people decided to make charcoal. For Ramona it was a great challenge to accompany the youth in this project. Because of the situation of the country they have no assurance of work or possibility of studying.

Making charcoal might seem fairly easy to some; others may have no idea how it is done. In San Patricio there is no high technology or financial resources. To make it the young people must use the most elementary methods. To see them doing this hard work to earn a little to be able to go forward and rely on their own resources is admirable.

One of the requirements to launch this project was for each young person involved to buy a share. Each share cost 10000 guaranis that many did not have. They showed great solidarity towards one another as they organised activities to raise the money.

Launching the enterprise

The 28 June 2003 was a special day for the youth of San Patricio. Nilani Hewawasan hfb, also of the San Patricio community, describes the launching of the charcoal products. Many people including the Manager, the priests and relatives of the young people responsible, gathered in the town hall.

The young entrepreneurs prepared the display of their products with great enthusiasm. Their tired, perspiring faces were wreathed in smiles when they saw their dreams fulfilled. The people of

San Patricio and their parents were very impressed when they saw their sons and daughters dressed smartly in suits and ties taking on the responsibility of addressing the assembly. There were even

tears of joy and pride. Fr. Carlos S.J. blessed the products with a prayer alluding to the significance of the moment and praising the ability of the youth to work together for their development.

It was also a moment of pride for the *Holy Family* sisters that Ramona had collaborated so closely in this undertaking with the youth.

The Rights of the Child

One of the first rights of the child is that he/she be recognised as a citizen of the state. That means the child must be entered in the Civil Register. It is a scandal in Paraguay, writes M. Jesus Iturralde of the community of New Germany, that many children are not registered and, therefore, do not exist as far as the state is concerned.

The team for the *Pastoral Care of the Child* is trying to defend these rights. In New Germany a section of the population has many little ones in this situation for various reasons. For the most part it is lack of interest on the part of parents, economic problems, or lack of the means of transport to travel to the centres.

Action by the Pastoral Team

They undertook to take a census, doing house to house visits to find out the number of children not yet registered. It was quite high. Their first action was to get an interview with the person in charge of the Registry to present the problem. They discovered that each registration cost 10 000 guaranis. Lack of a fixed income was one of the problems facing the parents. With help from some public

companies they managed to arrange for the registrar to travel to certain other places to provide the service. As a result, around 200 children have since become Paraguayan citizens.

Visiting the families is a very important work. It is possible to get useful details about risk situations, malnourished

children, pregnant women without prenatal care, lack of hygiene and even drinking water. It is also edifying to listen to them and share their joys and sufferings and create bonds of friendship and solidarity. The *Pastoral Care of Children* is beautiful as it holds out the possibility of bringing life and hope to needy people.

Pastoral Care of Vocations Charism – Expo

The second *Charism-Expo* took place at the end of May with these aims in mind:

- To present the consecrated life as a life option to the world of youth
- To make society aware of the different vocations and charisms that exist in the church
- To respond to the call for a prophetic dialogue with the world of today from the Word of God
- To bring about better integration between the different congregations.

The *Holy Family* Pastoral Vocational Team took advantage of this event to present our Charism. This year they enlarged their presentation to include the Secular Institute, the

Associates and the *Holy Family* Youth.

Youth Retreat

It is customary for the Vocational Team to organise a retreat for the children of their communities during the holidays. This year's aim was: "To grow in the love of God as source of joy and happiness". They chose the theme: "If you knew the gift of God".

These retreats help the children to experience together something of the love of God – Mother and Father – as some of them come from families with difficulties. It is lovely to see so many young people in situations of conflict in a secularised world wanting to encounter the living Christ.

Declaration of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Ratified 20 November 1989



Article 7

1. The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.

Article 8

1. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference.

Canada

A World Health Organisation with a difference

What could be done to support and sustain the work of Canadian missionaries throughout the world? The question preoccupied Fr. Celestine Marcotte. The answer came when, in 1968, he founded International Health Collaboration (CSI). It was a response to the many requests of help from missionaries on home visits.

Fr. Celestine gathered a group of faithful collaborators who were either returned missionaries or retired health workers or friends and family of missionaries. In 1975 the CSI became a corporate body. That facilitated its presence in more than 85

countries for 35 years (1968-2003).

During that time there has been remarkable worldwide appreciation and interest in the CSI. Contact is maintained through visits by missionaries, by post and telephone. A feeling of belonging to a great human family concerned with its sick brothers and sisters on the planet is experienced. The expertise demonstrated in the selection of medicines and medical equipment adapted to the needs of the missionaries is also much appreciated.

Holy Family involvement

Violette Bouffard hfb writes that several of the sisters of Quebec

have given hearts and hands to the organisation. Cecile Gonthier was one of the first three to support Fr. Celestine during the difficult beginnings. She still has a lively interest in it and will always accept an invitation to important events. Jeanne-D'arc, Juliette Gonthier and Yvonne René also worked with it for several years. The CSI is extremely grateful to them for their services so whole-heartedly given.

Several *Holy Family* missionaries have also benefited from the CSI. Violette concludes by wishing God's blessing on all those who give hands to the Word and hope in destitution and solitude.



India

25 Years of Presence – a time to review and revision

Asia

The past, present and future were very much in the minds of the sisters of the Delegation as

our life in order to become a gift to the world”.

Personal, Community and Delegation Renewal

She went on to describe how they had been led to question themselves and reflect deeply on their situation and to look at the challenges facing them. This gave them a deeper understanding

to enable them to work towards personal growth. The committee members visited them to revitalise their community life, basing their input on the Chapter Decrees and proposals of the Delegation Assembly.

A member of Fr. Manuel’s team also visited each community for a Re-visioning Exercise. She touched on aspects such as personal vocation, personal mission, professional training, strengthening community life and community ministries. Her approach helped the sisters to



they prepared to celebrate their 25th anniversary in India. From the beginning of their mission they made a very definite option for the poor, with women and children their special targets. They have consistently adhered to this fundamental choice as their numbers increased from 3 sisters in 1 community to 55 in 8 today.

of the factors that promote poverty and they came up with ways to improve the quality of their mission with the poor.



Hyacintha being garlanded on the Jubilee Day

Speaking at the Delegation Assembly of 2003 (August 23-24) Sr. Rose Mary Swaminathan, the Delegation Leader, referred to the previous year’s Assembly when they were invited “to look at our 25 years in India, our successes and failures, so as to make the Jubilee a celebration, a conversion and a reorienting of

In this they were animated and helped by the Jubilee Committee of sisters and a Social Analysis Team led by Fr. Manuel Alphonse S.J.

By means of a questionnaire the communities were helped to gain deeper self-awareness

recapture their past, to look into the present and to look to the future with hope.

Spiritual Renewal

This was a priority. To begin the Jubilee year they organised three days of prayer to the

Blessed Trinity before 30 August 2002. The final day of the triduum was dedicated to the Holy Family, the Gentle Image of the Trinity. The annual retreat (2002-2003) was directed by Srs. Pushpam and Romie on the theme of *God Alone*.

**Towards the next
25 Years**

Rose Mary declared that, as a result of the reflections, study and prayer, the Delegation had arrived at a clear understanding and greater consciousness of its present situation and what is required for it to go forward. One call felt



Margaret is garlanded.

Charism. Since you have opted



Left: Prayer service with traditional Indian rite

need to study and be familiar with the theology and spirituality of the Family so that they can effectively carry out this vision.”

**The Crowning
Celebration**

This was the Eucharist of thanksgiving that took place on 25 August 2003 at the Shrine of Our Lady of Velankanni, Besant Nagar. Margaret Muldoon and Hyacinthat Moopisa, who had been present for the Delegation Assembly, described it as beautiful in its simplicity.

strongly by most sisters is: to strengthen Family Apostolate. In this connection it is worth quoting from Fr. Manuel’s concluding remarks: “I feel you should find your strength in terms of Family - which is your

for the poor, you can begin with doing creative ministry for families. The *Holy Family* can come up with an alternative Vision for the Indian family which is fast changing its form, structure and values. Sisters

Final Professions in the Jubilee Year

29-12-2002

Sr. Santhana Kamazh Vincent
Sr. Gracy Selvi Antonysamy
Sr. Shanthi Arulanandam
Sr. Santhiyagammal Mathew

06-08-2003

Sr. Vanakka Mary Irudayam
Sr. Joseph Mary Thanislaus

Testimonies

The Souvenir booklet produced by the committee delegated for this task contains many messages of congratulation and esteem. Some come from Holy Family sisters, past workers in the fruitful vineyard of India, as well as those who contributed in different ways to its foundation and growth. Others are striking testimonies from people outside the Family, bishops and priests, who have observed or shared in the work of the sisters. We shall give a few of the latter.

Most Rev. S. Edward Francis
Bishop of Sivagangai

Your very name, Sisters of the *Holy Family*, suggests that your model is the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Your communities in Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh bear witness to the love, peace and joy of the Holy Family through a community life of faith, hope and charity.

Swami Joseph A. Samrakone O.M.I.

As one associated with your "Founding Sisters" and the others from the very inception I heartily congratulate all your sisters ... for your daring, courage and creativity in letting your *Holy Family* CHARISM encounter the socio-political, religio-cultural reality of India.

At the beginning there was the natural temptation to follow the beaten path to establish one more religious Congregation in India following the usual 'Religious-phenomena' prevalent in India, viz., 'establishing English-medium schools and the like. You did not succumb to this temptation; rather you listened to the Holy Spirit and discerned Her ways for you and went about forming *Holy Family* communities which would follow the Spirit where SHE had gone before you as Her humble collaborators. Today after 25 years ... the Local Church of India is now adorned with the precious JEWEL that is the CHARISM your Father and Founder, Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, bequeathed to you.

The other daunting task was to form young women, daughters of the soil, who would respond to the particular demands of your apostolate... You have been successful in forming young women in whom your Charism has been coming alive.

Fr. M.A. Pathinathan O.M.I.
Oblate Delegation Superior

We, your Brother Priest of the O.M.I. Indian Delegation, send you hearty congratulations as you celebrate the Silver Jubilee of your evangelising presence and ministries in our Motherland, India. We are proud and overjoyed to see the great impact you are making in a quiet but meaningful way in the lives of so many people, especially the poor and the marginalised ones of our society. It is fitting to describe you as great missionary sisters who are at the level of the poor, continuing the "life-giving" ministry of our Lord Jesus, as we read in Luke 4, 18-19.

Fr. Manuel Alphonse S.J.
Loyola College, Chennai

I have indeed been privileged to get to know the congregation through the process of evaluation that you invited me for a part of your jubilee celebration. The *Holy Family* and its place in the India Church is indeed valuable, precisely because you are one of the 'little flock' and your ministries have not been hampered by big institutions. The lives of your sisters, in close contact with the poor of this country have been exemplary. As you move towards the future, I am sure challenges are many too, but your closeness to our people and your own charism will be your strengths as you move forward.

Do convey my humble greetings to all the sisters of the congregation!

Sri Lanka – Jaffna Province

Building Peace at the Grassroots

Girls Bonding for Peace

In our February 2003 issue, no. 8, we gave an account of the Inter-Congregational Women's Desk (ICWD), how it came to be formed and its aims. The religious sisters involved, among them Eudoxie Sebamalai hfb to whom we are indebted for ongoing information, are a reflective and dynamic group of people who discern the most pressing needs in their society and act to find solutions. Their main project for the year 2003 is to mobilise girls for the peace effort.

They started the movement, "Girls Bonding for Peace" on 8 March 2002, International Woman's Day. Fifteen schools in Tamil areas and another fifteen in Sinhalese areas submitted names of students who wished to send peace greetings to a companion from the opposite side. Names and addresses were coupled and sent back to the school. In this way nearly 2 000 students participated in the exchange of

peace greetings. Some of the students still continue their first contacts.

Face-to Face Contact

Fifty students from five schools in the north-east and fifty students from five schools from the Colombo district were invited for a weekend live-in experience at Good Shepherd Convent, Kotahena. This was a very positive one for all. The girls were very sincere about the negative feelings that had grown through the years, the fears they had developed and the prejudices that had increased with time. The girls from the North and East were able to express their fear of coming to Colombo and meeting the Sinhalese students.

As the friendships deepened the girls themselves called for a more permanent movement. Thus was born "Girls Bonding



for Peace". Since then groups of girls from the south have visited those in the North and East. The principals and teachers from the schools in both areas spared no pains to welcome the young people and make their stay a very pleasant one.

In August a group of sisters visited Jaffna and, with the help of the Apostolic Carmel and Holy Family sisters, were able to meet more than 500 students. From them came the idea of having a camp during the holiday season. It was fixed for April 2003.

ICWD Camp at St. Anthony's Shrine, Wahacotte 27-30 April 2003

For four days 215 people, mainly young girls of all the four religions in Sri Lanka, met to experience living in peace. Wahacotte, where the camp was held, is just 10 km from the geographical centre of Sri Lanka, Galagedera, and so a very good place for people from north, south, east and

west to come together for this purpose.

The activities organised for the girls were designed to create an atmosphere of quiet reflection and harmony with creation and



all people. This enabled them to share with great honesty

their feelings of pain at the suffering they had endured during the war. Girls from both sides who had suffered now felt there was someone on the opposite side who listened and understood them. Tears were shed as the bonding got deeper. There was input on the

causes of the conflict and a session on inner healing.

Follow-up

They were determined it was not to be a once-off event. They had a period to reflect on what they would do to promote peace in the future, on a

personal and corporate level. They came up with their own projects and promised to put them into action. At an inter-religious worship the girls pledged “to uphold peace in their hearts, in their families, in their school and neighbourhood, in the country and world”.

Bridging the Gap between North and South

The continuing gap between the North and South of the Island was highlighted at a conference held in Vavuniya Sri Lanka in March 2003 on the theme of “The Role of Civil Society In The Peace Building And Reconciliation Process.” This event was a joint effort of three NGOs (Non Governmental Organisations): THE SEWALANKA FOUNDATION which does relief and development work in the North and East, THE NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL which advocates a negotiated resolution of the ethnic conflict and the JAPAN CENTRE FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION which brings International expertise and resources to the conflict resolution process in Sri Lanka.

Rationale for Conference

The Concept Paper states:

“The present peace process currently (sic) taking place between the Government and LTTE is largely confined to these two parties. There exists little opportunity for other parties and the civil society to participate in and/or contribute towards decisions made by the Government and the LTTE...”

It goes on to say: “It is imperative that the civil society become involved to ensure that the decisions regarding the future of Sri Lanka are balanced and well informed.”

This conference was an important event because

representatives selected from all over the island from various organizations working for Human Rights, Justice and



Eudoxie addressing the Conference

Peace met together. Also present were two Catholic priests, a Buddhist monk, a Hindu Brahmin and *Holy Family* sisters Jude and Eudoxie.

Eudoxie is a collaborator and co-worker with the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka, so the three NGOs extended an invitation to her to participate and contribute to their

preparatory panel discussions and in the conference. She felt it was a God-given opportunity for her to speak of the situation in the country, its causes and possible solutions, from the standpoint of our *Holy Family* heritage our charism, corporate commitment and prophetic vision and mission. She appealed to North and South to work hard and conscientise each other to promote human dignity, communion and peace through justice and called them to reconciliation and reunion.

The significance of the conference, says Eudoxie, lies in the wide representation it covered, its direct confrontation with the problems involved, its positive programmes of action and its culmination in the memorandum to the government.



EUROPE

Celebrating 150 Years

As mentioned in our previous issue, this is a Jubilee Year for the Province of Britain and Ireland. Throughout the year the sisters have been commemorating and giving thanks through prayer and

festivity. The first big public gathering took place in Leeds with the Eucharistic celebration as the focal point of the day. Similar private celebrations were held in the two communities of Sicklinghall and Rock Ferry so that the elderly sisters, who were unable to travel and who had 'borne the heat of the day', could also share the joy of all. The main celebration in Ireland was on 6 September. In due course a souvenir booklet will be published. The following account has been compiled by our correspondents in the Province.

The Jubilee at Mount St Mary's, Leeds, on 5 July was a very moving experience, filling us with deep gratitude for all that has been, all that is now and all that will be in the future.

The ethos present in the school struck me forcibly. We were warmly greeted as Holy Family Sisters by the head teacher, Mrs Bernadette King, and members of her staff who had worked so hard as a team to

make sure that everything planned for the day ran smoothly.

We were delighted to welcome to our Province Margaret Muldoon, Hyacintha Moopisa, Mary Loughran and Síle McGowan for this special occasion. It was also an

With him were Fr Tom Murphy, Oblate Provincial, and Oblate and diocesan priests who had been associated with the Holy Family Sisters in their work.

In his deeply moving homily, the Bishop paid great tribute to the Sisters for their contribution to education in the country over



L. to R. Ms.B. King, Sr. Kate, Mr Leggett (Mayor of Leeds), Bishop Roche, Ms. Leggett, Sr. Hyacintha, Mr. Flannery (Headteacher Primary School)

opportunity for them to meet so many of our Sisters.

The day began with the celebration of Mass before which our Provincial, Sister Kate Cuskelly, welcomed all who had come to celebrate with us. The Bishop of Leeds was in Lourdes for the Diocesan Pilgrimage at that time, so Bishop Arthur Roche, coadjutor bishop of Leeds, presided.

the last 150 years, especially in the Diocese of Leeds. What added to the liturgical celebration was the participation of some of the present students from both the primary and the High School, The seniors excelled in a liturgical dance depicting the arrival of the four foundresses, their crosses and challenges, and then the joy of those who were now benefiting from what

had been laid down in those years of hardship.

Among the 500 people present there were 180 Sisters and Lay Associates, together with past students and former members of staff from all the schools belonging to Mount St Mary's parish. Also present were women who had been in the care of the Sisters in the Orphanage and Children's Homes. They were happy to meet some of the Sisters who had cared for them and provided the love and nurturing in their childhood years.

This meeting of friends from years long ago created a wonderful atmosphere, a real *Holy Family* spirit. During the celebration, we were very conscious of all the Sisters who, over the years, had given of themselves in the different areas of service. The benefits of all their prayers and sacrifices are still being reaped by our young people in Leeds.

Following a splendid buffet meal, Mrs King addressed the assembly. Thanking the Sisters for their work and dedication, she recognised the fact that in coming to Mount St Mary's, they came not only to fulfil the spiritual needs of the community, but also to address the many problems associated with deprivation and poverty. Mrs King went on to say that as the Mount St Mary's Secondary and Primary



At lunch in the assembly hall

schools move forward confidently into the 21st century, they will always retain the sense of mission, the values and, above all, the strong Catholic Faith fostered by the *Holy Family* Sisters, which has made Mount St Mary's so distinctive in the past and will continue to do so far into the future.

We were very touched when, towards the end of the celebration, a presentation was made to the Sisters of the *Holy Family*. This consisted of a casket made from the oak of the convent staircase,



Proudly displaying the key

replaced only five years ago. Inside was a key to the arched doorway through which thousands of Sisters, staff, pupils, orphans and parents have entered over the last 150 years. This was presented to symbolise the school's wish that the Sisters will forever

enjoy the freedom of the school they founded so many years ago.

The whole ethos of the school today, even though the last *Holy Family* Sisters left in 1982, can be summed up by the reply of a member of staff to the comment that it must have been a tiring day, "It is not hard work when it is for the family".

May the *Holy Family* spirit continue to flourish in Mount St Mary's and beyond.

The celebration in Sicklinghall

Sicklinghall was purchased in 1861 by Mother Xavier Geddes. It was first used as a house where Sisters, especially those in ill health, could leave the smoke and fog of the city behind and be refreshed in order to return to their work again. In 1929 a permanent community was established and today, the convent is a place of quiet for retired Sisters, where they can enjoy the beauty and peace of the Yorkshire countryside.

It was a fitting place to celebrate. We were celebrating not only our presence in Britain,

but also the lives of those first Sisters and indeed, the lives of all our elderly Sisters now in retirement after long and fruitful missions and whose prayerful interest in ongoing mission in the Province brings us all many blessings.

Mass was celebrated in the convent chapel by Fr John Murphy OMI, chaplain to the community. To give the community a flavour of the celebration in Leeds, the same liturgy was used, except for the liturgical dance. The same symbols of our life in Britain and Ireland were presented at the beginning of Mass: the crucifix worn by the first Sisters, the *Holy Family* crucifix and medal, a photograph of Sicklinghall to represent the community there and a globe representing the countries to which our Sisters left these shores many years ago.

After Mass, all processed to the cemetery beside the Convent to remember the first



Gathering at the cemetery in Sicklinghall

foundresses, all of whom are buried there, and also to remember all the other Sisters who lie there. The countryside around us was a lush green; the cemetery, peaceful and quiet, was immaculately kept. The names of Sisters buried here were read and their lives remembered as Fr John, in his white vestments, blessed the graves and prayed to our 'saints' in heaven. The

ceremony ended with the singing of the *Salve Regina*.

On returning to the house, a beautiful meal had been prepared and all continued the joyful atmosphere created by the uplifting Eucharistic Celebration and the memory of the Sisters whose life and mission we had just recalled in the cemetery.

Belgium-Antwerp

Friendship Day

The *Holy Family* community of Antwerp joined the wider community to prepare and celebrate Friendship Day on 8 May. The proceedings began with an ecumenical reflection in the cathedral of Our Lady of Antwerp, enlivened by the singing of the cathedral girls' choir. Concern for the weak of society was highlighted by a panel drawn from the Focolare Movement and the Anglican Church among others. The chaplain of the port of Antwerp, Mgr. Van den Berghe brought

the reflection to a close with a few well-chosen words.

This was followed by a seminar. The Council of Churches and other organisations devoted to marginalised people in society gave their testimonies. People suffering all kinds of deprivation, the homeless, the handicapped, the lonely, found their way to the reception hall. They were received warmly and enjoyed the games and amusements as well as the refreshments prepared.



Nothing was spared to make this a unique occasion. Many who could not come because of sickness or age were treated to a friendly visit, a flower, a child's drawing.

It would be hard to say who got most pleasure and satisfaction from the day, those who prepared it or those who benefited.

France-Liège

Celebrating Religious Life

■ *At Versailles.* – On 2 February a large group of religious women and men gathered in the large house of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart all with one object in view: the Face of Christ.

By his presence, the bishop of the diocese made it a pastoral visit thereby reiterating the Church's attachment to the consecrated life. Six sisters from the Versailles community participated, determined to share their experience with those who remained at home.

It was wonderful to discover again the diversity of calls to follow Christ. Members of a Secular Institute, a Carmelite, a consecrated Virgin, an Apostolic religious all gave their testimonies. An ecumenical note was added by the presence of ten Deaconesses of Reilly.

They contemplated the Face of Christ in iconography, listened to a speaker recalling the essentials of the Consecrated Life and shared the Eucharistic table. It was a few more steps on the long road to Christian unity.

■ *At Marseilles.* – On June 15, the feast of the parish of Chartreux where the *Holy Family* community of Ricard Digne is situated, the Dominican sisters of the Presentation wished to celebrate the jubilees of two of their sisters in the parish church.

That inspired the *Holy Family* community with the idea of using the occasion to have a feast of Consecrated Life.

They contacted the communities of the district: 7 communities of women and 3

of men. It took them two meetings to prepare the event that took place at the 10.30 parish mass. Each congregation presented its charism and its main apostolic commitments in the context of the Prayer of the Faithful. They then renewed their vows using the following formula:

"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. With the Christian community of Chartreux I renew my vows of poverty, chastity and obedience to live at the service of the church and humankind and be a witness to the love of God."

A Holy Family Centenarian

Denys Saulay of the community Espérance et Accueil, Versailles, was born on 28 May in 1903, a hundred years ago. She has been in the *Holy Family* for 61 years, 30 of which she has spent in her present community.

Two of the residents gave a moving account of the build-up of excitement and the enthusiastic preparations for the important day as well as the events of the day itself. They expressed eloquently the esteem and love all have for Denys as they did all they could to make her 100th birthday memorable.

It was not only the community and residents who were involved. The Administration and Staff of the Residence were there to offer their congratulations to the centenarian. It was also a public occasion. Two Delegates from the Municipality came bearing the Medal of Versailles.

It must be mentioned that Denys is an accomplished pianist and during the day she entranced her friends and guests by a brilliant performance on the piano.

Brief news from Posadas

Vicariate

VICARIATE CHAPTER

The Vicariate Chapter has been convoked. It is to be held at Martillac from 3 – 17 September 2004. The chosen theme is: "Community of disciples before God for the world". The whole Institute can now join with

the contemplative sisters in praying for this important event in their life, that of the Institute and even of the larger Family.

2003 – A MINI-JUBILEE YEAR

The monastery of Posadas was founded in 1993. Although ten years is not normally a period that is marked significantly in the life span of a foundation, it is worthy of mention that one of

the foundresses and present community member, Trinidad Paniagua, is celebrating her Golden Jubilee of religious profession this year. As they thank God with and for her, the community pray that God may continue making her life fruitful as, together, they build another Nazareth.

A RITE OF PASSAGE

On 20 July Petty Rosillo, who has been with the community for some time, began a month's retreat in preparation for her entry into the *Holy Family* contemplative life. The

community gathered in the oratory on 21 August for a simple and profound ceremony during which Betty was clothed with the habit of the Contemplative sisters by Maria Dolores Arizondo, representing the Vicariate.

The following day, the feast of Mary, Queen of the Universe, the event was celebrated as an Institute occasion. Several Apostolic sisters joined the community for the Eucharist. A Peruvian Jesuit, together with the rector of the North-Eastern Argentinean Seminary who was concluding his retreat at

of it was constructed. Now the work of completing it has begun. It is a source of great joy and satisfaction to the community. The sign of the cross reminds them of their life of surrender to God and openness to their brothers and sisters.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE LOCAL CHURCH

The diocese of Posadas initiated the Loreto Project in the year 2002. Its aim is "to retrieve the values of the spiritual patrimony of the diocese, to forge its own identity starting from the lights

and shadows of its history in order to renew its mission, its prophetic presence, its commitment to the building of a new reality founded on



the monastery, presided. In communion with all the Sisters they asked Mary, Queen of the Universe, to help them commit themselves faithfully to God's plan for the world, as they welcome God's gift in the deep contemplation of the simple daily life of Nazareth. Eucharistic communion was continued around the common table as all shared a festive meal.

CONSTRUCTION WORK

The Posadas monastery was planned to be in the form of a cross. To begin with, only part

love of the poor and the active participation of pastoral agents in an organic pastoral plan".

Through prayer the contemplative community of Posadas is in communion with all that the Christian communities experience with regard to the project. They give thanks for God's action in the history of the diocese, for all the missionaries who committed themselves to sowing the seed of the gospel, and whose work is continued by so many women and men today.

Corporate Commitment

The Christian Response to Globalisation

The Asian Institute of Missiology organized a Training Programme on Justice and Peace from 29 July to 12 August 2003 in Sri Lanka. Two *Holy Family* sisters participated: Angelina Lekhotla (Lesotho) and Matilda Lazarus (Colombo). The following details come from Matilda.

The aim was to “form powerful persons in Asia”. Participants came mainly from Asia and the Far East. Resource people were also largely from Asia but there were several from Europe. All were experts in their field.

They addressed such topics as:

- ◆ The impact of Globalisation on the third world and the need for Global justice.
- ◆ A search for alternatives
- ◆ Training for justice and peace in Multi-Religious Milieu
- ◆ Peace building in the context of conflict in Asia
- ◆ Justice in the context of Asian Religious conflict
- ◆ Bible and justice
- ◆ Conflict Resolution, reconciliation and healing
- ◆ Towards evolving a spirituality of justice.

The whole programme was based on how globalisation has effected Asia economically, culturally, socially and religiously. The alternatives for each aspect were discussed very forcefully. The realisation that globalisation has become a way of life and that the system is maintained by powerful figures came home to all. As each country presented its report it was obvious that the whole of Asia is trapped in globalisation and many are victims of it.

One speaker stressed that there are alternatives to resist globalisation and there is a need to search for alternatives through the existing system. The questions that need to be asked are:

- What kind of society do we want to build?
- What kind of education do we want?

Another speaker recalled our basic Christian vocation and said that we are called to a life of righteousness and justice. He also said that Baptism means the reversal of the structure of domination to a structure of communion.

To work for communion one needs to have a strong spirituality. Prof. Lieve Trough shook the assembly when she stressed that the church is a Globalised Multi-National enterprise structure. She very clearly differentiated between the church and the Reign of God. She said that in the Reign of God there is an abundance of food, wine, and celebration for everybody. There is no such thing as spiritualised matter but ordinary matter.

Asceticism was not Jesus' way of life, she went on to say.

In the Reign of God everything happens *here* and *now*. But the CHURCH shifts the HERE and NOW to the THERE and LATER, and ABUNDANCE to ASCETICISM. Lieve made it clear that we Christians, and much more so Religious, must have a spirituality that liberates others.

We need to break the Pyramid structure, and analyse the structures that are not ecclesial. We need to use language that liberates people. We need to use the language that breaks, creates and transforms. We need a theology of resistance in order to be liberated. Our spirituality should be built with the people. Our prayer must be centred in the people and with them we must be strengthened.

ALTERNATIVES TO GLOBALISATION

- ◆ Solidarity in raising a worldwide voice for peace and justice (against armaments, the ecological crisis)
- ◆ Develop our own political system rather than merely adopting western models of governments - being pro-active, not waiting for others.
- ◆ Democratising the church – de-dogmatise theology and God, rediscovering God and Christ through re-reading the Bible and reflecting on our situation.
- ◆ Critique patriarchy, religious, states, and power relations. This will require an inter-religious, inter-disciplinary approach.
- ◆ Signature campaign against exploitation and for compensation and redistribution
- ◆ Signature campaign for the rights of migrant workers.
- ◆ Challenge the entire present media system and develop alternate people-based media.
- ◆ Resistance to the sale of National assets.
- ◆ Do theology with grass roots groups and also inter-disciplinary studies (economy, politics)
- ◆ Develop new liturgies, religious find a spirituality of collective resistance to social evils and promotion of Justice and Peace and the common good.

International Year of Fresh Water

May we draw your attention to a booklet produced by the JPIC Commission of the USG/UISG in Rome on the subject of WATER.

Using the method See, Judge, Act, it provides facts about the water situation worldwide, guidelines for biblical and theological reflection, the reasons why Religious should be concerned and ways of acting to preserve the water resources of the world.

It can be downloaded from the website:
www.ofm-jpic.org/agua

