

*The Name of
God
Is
Mercy*

Pope Francis

MOSAIC I 2016



*Rejoicing with you
in God's merciful goodness*

*Livramento Janice
Beatrice Gertrud*



This MOSAIC features the continued works of our congregation as we prepare ourselves for our 2016 General Chapter. Visibly we are moving our external structures through the ongoing work of our Constitutions and Restructuring Committees, the CCME (education) group, support of the second common formation program, our congregational missions (Angola and Brooklyn), jubilee pilgrimage celebrations and finally, through preparing a financial report that clearly shows how each province contributes to the congregational vision and makes possible our ministries present and future.

As we give the best of who we are to re-organize our external structures, so too are we called even more to the ongoing conversion of our internal, personal restructuring process. Our Lenten time has, without doubt, given us a deeper appreciation of such internal gazing.

In the book *The Name of God is Mercy*, Pope Francis says: “mercy” derives from *miser cordis* which means opening one’s heart to wretchedness”. Wretchedness is a word not often heard these days but its synonyms are well known: unhappiness, woe, misery, dejection- to give a few. As we look around us in our own countries or across the globe, the world is crying out with the effects of war, displacement, migration, trafficking and so many other signs stemming from wretchedness.

While busy re-thinking ways that can better address our changing reality, we are also challenged to look into our ever changing inner world. What in our heart space cries out our own wretchedness? Can our SMIC relationships address the changes needed to heal-- one another and the world?

“Mercy is the divine attitude which embraces, it is God’s giving himself to us, accepting us, and bowing to forgive.” Jesus said he came not for those who were good but for the sinners.” (p.8)

With this great gift of forgiveness, we are set free once more. Inner restructuring can begin again to re-organize our priorities, fortify our relationships with God, with one another and with the world so in need of this witness and grace. It is this process of inner healing, forgiveness and reconciliation – *mercy*- that ignites the flame of the purpose of our external restructuring efforts transforming our Chapter gathering into a unified body of sisters .

CONSTITUTION REVISION

After the input from the Sisters from all Provinces/Region, the material was collated and edited, then it was sent to Sr. Janis Jordan for her Theological observations regarding the input from the Sisters. The material was also sent to a canon lawyer for his advice on the contribution of the Sisters.

Now, after all the input, the CRC - Constitutions Revision Committee will prepare a proposal to be presented at the General Chapter.



6. Also in April, a “Founders’ Week” event will take place on the same day in all the schools.
7. The Belem province is collecting all materials about our founders to share with our 11 schools of Brazil.
8. Each school has a Religious Education representative
9. They are working in forming a virtual community. The expectation is for this to function by April.

As stated by Sr. Gizele Marinho, the coordinator of the CCME, “we are a movement in motion...” the Convention “excited” us, there is no return... the CCME caught on and is helping us become closer as Brazilian provinces during this time. I believe that the next steps will bring us even closer as provinces. The steps are lengthy but concrete.

Asia:

Juliana Li-Jung Cheng
Principal of Sheng Kung Girls’ High



It gives me great pleasure to be writing how Sheng Kung in Taiwan has started to actively pursue the goals that were discussed in our most recent Convention. It was a tremendous honor to be invited to speak and share the experiences of Sheng Kung Girls’ High School at the Convention as well as being able to participate in the subsequent discussions and tours of various SMIC operations in Brazil. It was a thoroughly enlightening experience that surely opened up our eyes and allowed us to see a bright way forward for Sheng Kung in Taiwan and SMIC around the world.

After our team returned to Taiwan, we all gathered together twice to discuss what we learned from the trip and the Convention specifically and share any thoughts or epiphanies we had. We also discussed how the conclusions of the Convention might be enacted here in Taiwan under the Sheng Kung umbrella.

We then assembled a group of current and former Sheng Kung teachers, administrators, parents, and volunteers, known collectively as “Friends of Sheng Kung,” and the SMIC Associates and discussed our trip to Brazil and what we learned. A formal presentation was given as well as a discussion of how we might integrate the themes discussed and the overall mission and charism of SMIC into the daily workings of Sheng Kung.

At Sheng Kung Girls’ High School’s Opening Ceremony for the spring semester, I briefly discussed our trip to Brazil and the SMIC Convention. I then yielded the floor to Alex Huang, who accompanied us on the trip, for a 25-minute presentation on Brazil, SMIC, and the Convention. The whole student body and faculty enjoyed the presentation and listened very attentively. Afterwards, there were many questions from teachers and students about Brazil and the content of my speech sharing Sheng Kung’s experiences with global education. I think this will serve as a good starting point for the beginning the next phase in the development of our school system.

To further that goal, we also began regular meetings between our Provincial leader, Sr. Benedicta Kuo, as well Srs. Veronica Lee, Agnes Lee, and Joanna Wu, with myself, the Vice-Principal, and our coordinator for international affairs, Peter Lang. Within this group, we have begun seriously discussing the future development of SMIC in Taiwan, specifically about developing an experimental, Montessori-based elementary school to complement our current kindergartens and secondary education. This group has arranged for visits to our two SMIC kindergartens so that the participants can get a better understanding for experimental education and the Montessori system.

Finally, under the leadership of Peter Lang, our school has formed a Planning Group for Experimental Education to discuss how our junior-high and high-school system might be developed. They are currently in the early stages of discussion, but will continue to meet and research possible avenues for development, including the possibility of creating an experimental department at our school so that students will have an alternative to the rigid standard system. We hope through these meetings, more of our teachers might be inspired to make changes to their own educational strategies and endeavor to influence the rest of the school.

Financial information for Chapter review

Sr. Janice Jolin



To give a stronger sense to the Chapter Members of our Congregational finances and its ability to support Congregational ministries, the Provinces were requested to include in their Finance Report to the General Chapter information on the following questions. Responses are due in July so that a composite report will be ready at the Chapter.

CONGREGATIONAL/PROVINCE VISION and MISSION:

- ✓ Give examples of how your Province/Region's financial disbursements reflect support for the Mission-Vision Statement of the Congregation and of your Province or Region?
- ✓ Share your long range plan (10-15 years) for: a) care of the Sisters b) mission works including the projection of finances, and age and numbers of personnel who will sustain present and planned ministries. Changes to be made to reach stated goals.

SPONSORED WORKS = INSTITUTIONS

- ✓ Give the number of institutions owned. Do the Institutions depend on the Sisters to staff them? Give estimate of the number of Sisters able and interested in assuming key positions needed in the Institutions? What alternatives are you considering for the continuation of the Institutions?
- ✓ Are the SMIC institutions viable without province subsidies? (Sisters not receiving a salary, upkeep of the buildings and other direct province aid.)

INVESTMENTS

- ✓ Does your province/region have an investment portfolio? How is it decided? Does it reflect Socially Responsible Investing? (investments screened to avoid supporting corporations that are harmful to humans and creation.) EX. Stocks from companies where labor conditions are unfair and salaries substandard, where trafficked persons

are known to be used; arms manufacturing including landmines, ecologically damaging industries-toxic emissions, manufacturers of abortifacients, etc.

BALANCE SHEET

- ✓ Please submit in US dollar value, your Committee approved annual balance sheets from 2010 through 2015. (include separately balance sheets of Province/Region as corporation and SMIC Institutions as corporation.)



FAITH FORMATION
A JOURNEY FOR LIFE

Our prophetic voice is strengthened by our unity in diversity and readiness for mission, thus we consciously invest in the formation of our sisters

...

1. Common Formation Program 2016/2017

The second Common Formation Program will start on July 1, 2016 in Brazil with five young professed sisters from the Asian Province and one sister from Namibian Province. The program which was developed by the Formation Team will take place in Feira de Santana, Salvador Province. During the program the sisters will be accompanied by Sr. Silvia and part time by Srs. Veronica and Beatrix.

Moreover, there are different presenters, who will give input to specific topics, i.e., TOR, Marian Spirituality, Contemporary Mission, Consecration and Religious Vows, and Franciscan retreat in São José, Santarém. In the middle of June 2017, the young professed sisters will return to their home provinces.

2. Pilgrimage to Germany and Lourdes

The General Chapter 2010 recommended that the International Formation Team should plan an opportunity for Silver and Golden Jubilarians to gather together for a spiritual program of pilgrimage. This pilgrimage will take place in May this year with the participation of 14 Sisters from Salvador, 1 Sister from USA and 1 Sister from Germany. The sisters will have the opportunity to visit the birthplaces of our founders, the former Mission convent St. Josef-Wilkinghege, Neviges where our congregational medal is honored and participate in the pilgrimage to Lourdes where Mother Immaculate was cured 1909. The German Sisters are happy to welcome the 16 sisters in the home country of our founders.

Mission at the Borders.

The OIAPOQUE Mission Report of 2015

Sr. Zenilda Ferreira

We missionaries, Sr. Zenilda Ferreira, SMIC, Sr. Aparecida Viana (Sisters of Providence of God) and Ruth Oliveira (Lay Missioner from the St. Francis Xavier Parish of the Archdiocese of Belém) arrived at the Oiapoque on April 11th 2015, at about 5:30 AM with Fr. Nello and Sr. Rebecca who helped us for one month to adapt. It was with a heart full of joy and expectations that we stepped onto this land.

During the following days we were presented by Fr. Augustinho to the Parish.

Before going to the Oiapoque people, we spent a month in formation with the coordinators of the mission, Fr. Nello and Sr. Rebecca who oriented us through reflections, sharing about

the mission area. As an activity we spent Holy Week in the Village of the Temb  indigenous people, in Santa Maria.



Front door of our Missionary House -

internal courtyard view of our house.

view from above

During this first year our work plan was to learn the reality of the Oiapoque people. We did this through visits to the neighborhoods and direct contact with families seeking information about trafficked cases, migrants, prostitution, etc. We also went to the Border at St. Jorge, in French Guiana where we met Sisters, priests and laity who also work in the parish.

During the year, we visited families of the many small communities: S o Crist v o (Infraero); S o Jos  (Vila Vit ria); Sagrado Cora o de Jesus (Pertinho do C u); S o Raimundo Nonato (Nova Esperan a); S o Benedito (Centro); Nossa Senhora de Nazar  (Clevel ndia); Planalto; and including a part of the surroundings of the Mother Church (Central) where we live. We also had an opportunity to know some of the river communities and villages where Fr. Nello, Sr. Rebecca and Fr. Augustinho minister.

Here in the Parish we visit many families, ill, elderly and children and adolescents who are the most vulnerable ones subject to trafficking. We always seek to give a word of comfort and hope, helping when possible, conversing and trying to discover how trafficking and prostitution occur.

There is social, economic, and emotional vulnerability in the communities. It is often caused by violence directed to children and women, drugs consumed by youth and children, situations of parent-youth conflict, prostitution of adolescents often encouraged by the mother, mothers working in the mining fields with children who are alone, or in some cases with relatives or friends where oftentimes sexual abuse occurs.

Some of our work to prevent these occurrences include embroidery classes, crochet and cross point stitching. We have also begun crafts with girls and boys generally from situations of suffering.



Crafts promote self esteem in the women, occupy the mind and to create friendships. We always begin with a prayer and during the work we hold conversations about various family and community situations.

As a concrete gesture of Christmas, with the help of the parish and the local forum, we held a *Solidarity Campaign* having as its theme “to give is to love” with the intention of collecting good, clothes, toys to be donated thus giving a joyful Christmas to the families and communities. Forty (40) families benefitted from food baskets, 50 children with toys and some 80 people (children and adults) with clothes.

During Christmas time, we also partnered with DPAC Fronteira, where we created a “Friends of the Children” network along with a Christmas Solidarity in the community of Vila Vitória, distributing toys, lunch and clothing.



We receive daily many people in our Mercy House who come for information, water to drink and who need food and also to talk or seek our advice about some family problem. These are indigenous city people, migrants and parishioners

During 2015, we also were visited by Dom Pedro José Conti, the Bishop of Macapá, Sr. Nila Soares, provincial, Sr. Maria Inês president of the National Office of the Religious Conference, Fr. Camille de São Jorge, Fr. Paulo of CIMI. All came to know something about our Mission on the Borders and to encourage us missionaries.

During the year, one of our missionary team members Sr. Aparecida, returned to São Paulo to assist a family member experiencing illness.

We know that there are many things to do but we are certain that being here in Oiapoque and knowing a bit about the culture of the people and their difficulties, problems and needs, little by little we will be a sign of the presence of the Kingdom present among the people.

Being sent...Congregational Mission in Brooklyn, N.Y,

Sr. Dilecta Yang & Sr. Clara Wang



Fr. Do's Sunday class students

Walking on 8th Avenue in Brooklyn, I think that I am in a town of China. People who are passing by are all Chinese, things in the stores are all from China. My new mission to work in St. Agatha Parish surprised me first by this scene. St. Agatha Parish was founded in 1921, and now the majority of parishioners speak Spanish, some English and a growing number of Chinese people. I was assigned mostly to work in the Chinese ministry.

First we started Sunday class with the children: there are about 30 children. Parents are happy to have their children learn things about our faith.

Chinese children in Sunday class performs during Chinese New Year with the Bishop of Brooklyn.



Beginning of the year of Mercy, we hold a pilgrimage every first Monday of the month to Regina Pacis Church where Sr. Clara is working. While walking for the 20 blocks, we give out fliers about our parish and our faith. Some people accept the paper, some refuse,



but we spread the joy of the good news we have received. Passing through the Holy Door, we pray the Rosary and the Divine Mercy chaplet.

During this Lent, I gave a retreat to the Chinese parishioners; about sixty people attended the retreat. Looking at their attentive face, I could feel the power of the Holy Spirit among us.

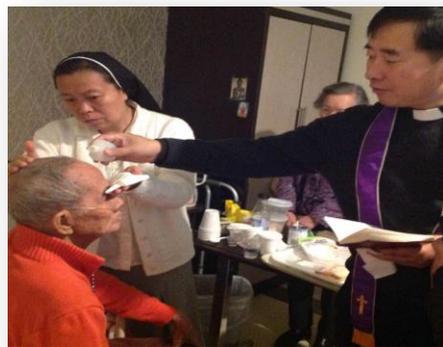
The parish of Regina Pacis also has a grade school with about 150 students. We hope and are working on to bring more Chinese students to the school. I also help to translate materials for people who want more information.



As I am getting clarity about my new mission, I pray to God give me wisdom to serve His people.



Sister Clara attends parishioners of St. Rosalia Church and visits and brings Holy Communion to the residents in the Norwegian Christian Home and Health Center.



She also coordinates and teaches English classes for Evangelization in the conference center of Regina Pacis Church/Basilica..most students are Chinese.

Tombrock Spiritual Center—Tainan Fu Cheng Sheng Kung
Education Development Foundation

Sr. Agnes Lee

In the year 2000 or so, with small donation from Sisters Agnes and Veronica’s family we established “Tainan Fu Cheng Sheng Kung Education Development Foundation”. The primary purpose of the income of the foundation was to support the on- going education and formation for both teachers from Sheng Kung girls’ High School and Sisters from the Province.



Since 2002, the only regular donor supporting the foundation was Mr. Wu Yu-tsai (Francis Wu) , a good friend and semi-member of Taiwan SMICs. However, in 2008, the world economy was hit by the serious international economic crisis. Considering the consequences on businessmen, we cordially asked Mr. Wu to stop his annual donation to the Foundation. Since then we have no regular donor, nor did we do any fund raising for any project. Also

with the change of leadership and other professional personnel both in the Province and the school, there was no Sister assigned to manage of the Foundation. Consequently the Foundation was entering a “winter sleep”. Years have gone by, we realized that any established Foundation Fund was not allowed to stay inactive. So last year, 2015, the Provincial leadership decided to wake up this sleeping Foundation assigning Sister Agnes with this task.

Since Sheng Kung School already has a Parent Teacher Association which has finally taken up the responsibility of supporting our teachers’ on-going education, we thus included the “promotion of the spiritual well being for all” in the purposes of “Tainan Fu Chen Sheng Kung Education Development Foundation ” With this direction, a Tombrock Spiritual Center was established on the school campus. We took the unification of Christian brothers and sisters as the first mission of this new Spiritual Center. A concrete step was taken, that we are collaborating with the Presbyterian Churches here in Taiwan. Pastor Cheng, Jer Yu is the assistant chairperson of the Tombrock Spiritual Center.



Japanese Contemplative Drama



Sending Peace out in all directions

The Tombrock Spiritual Center officially opened on December 8, 2015. The Center offers year round programs both in the Center and offering outreach service.

The programs held at the Center are: weekly basic spiritual community, monthly one day spiritual practice, seasonal (Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter) three day retreats.

Outreach Program offers: Retreats held in the Presbyterian Churches and various retreat houses.

In addition to the above spiritual services, the Center also offers music lessons on Chinese classical instruments. Eventually the Center would like to have groups of interested people coming to study together in the field of spirituality. As time goes on and things develop, we may have a publication related to spiritual growth and well being.

Taiwan Earthquake and SMIC response

By Sr. Catharina Tien



Feb. 6, at 3:57 am, just one day before the traditional Chinese New Year Eve, a magnitude-6.4 earthquake shocked the whole island, which toppled many buildings, injured 500 more people, and caused a great deal of fatalities in Tainan, the oldest city in Taiwan. The death toll of the earthquake was 117 people. Of the fatalities, 115 people died in the 16-storey Weiguan Jinlong apartment building in the city of Tainan. Because of this

earthquake, the Lunar New Year left with heavy hearted and sincere prayers.

While rescue and search teams from around the island were untiringly scrambling to the toppled building to find more survivors who were still trapped in the rubble of the Weiguan high-rise tower, restaurants and hotels were opening their doors and offering food or shelter to victims or their families. Local churches and some philanthropic organizations also immediately mobilized as many as resources -volunteers, aid materials, food, snacks, hot beverages , face masks, gloves, hand warmers, clothing and blankets food, etc. to be sent to the Church relief station near the collapsed building. From Feb. 7 to Feb. 9, SMICs of Tainan community took turns staying overnight with lay people at the relief station. Following sharing are from our Vietnamese sisters:

1. In my life, I have never known anything about an earthquake until coming to Taiwan. On Feb. 6, I arrived at the seriously damaged area and hoped I could do some things for the victimized families and the rescue teams. I was quite touched to see a lot of men and women, college students, and volunteers with different religions staying at the spot to take care of anyone who asked for help. Their commitment shows that they not only brought visible necessities to the needy, but also touched their hearts through caring and thoughtfulness. This sad event is a good opportunity for me to deeply empathize with others' pains, and learn how to care for other's needs with love. *(by Sr. Joyce Ha)*

2. Our service was mainly to care for needs of victim families and the rescuers. Sometimes I felt what I could do was quite little... At the resting place, there were many other volunteers from different institutions. I was moved when I saw a store owner bring food to the rescuers, "Many thanks for your



efforts. You are heroes in our country!” Indeed, those “heroes” committed to their work at the expenses of their lives, and even of the time being with their families and friends. What they have done for the victimized families realizes what Jesus said in the Bible “ 『 Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 』 (Jn 15:13) (by Sr. Monica Le)

3. On hearing such a sad news, I prayed, hoping everyone was safe. When arriving at the spot, I could hardly express the mixed feelings in my mind. But my little service at the resting place made me feel happy. This unexpected earthquake showed me how vulnerable our life is! At the spot, I saw how people faced this event through their desire, efforts and love. I am grateful for such an opportunity to serve people (by Sr. M. Hannah Ngo)

This tragic event has come to an end, recovery operations will be lasting for a period of time for the victimized. All sisters in Taiwan appreciated those letters and supportive prayers from the SMIC provinces around the world, especially a caring phone call from Sr. Livramento as soon as she watched the breaking news in USA.

Let's keep all victim families, who either lost their beloved or were wounded, in our prayers. May our merciful God be journeying them with love and strength!

The Closing of the Year of Consecrated Life

Sr. Anna Angelica Tran

2015 is a year dedicated to Consecrated Life and the whole year is full of God's Grace for all consecrated people.

In Taiwan, the official closing of the Year of Consecrated Life was held on February 3rd, 2016 at Taichung Stella Matutina Girls' High School. More than 500 consecrated people including Bishops, priests, Sisters and Laities from 7 Dioceses participated in this communion gathering. With gratitude, they shared their experiences in this way of life.

12 SMICs from Kaohsiung and Tainan participated in this whole day's activity. It was hosted by the Taiwan Bishops Conference and the Association of Catholic Religious in Taiwan.

From the sharing, I admire the life-giving strength of consecrated life, and are grateful that in nowadays rich society, there are still a group of people would consecrated their beautiful life for the kingdom of God. I also perceive that although the charism of each congregation are different, all of the religious are willing to empty themselves to work together to continue the tasks entrusted by our God.

It was also pleasant to see the reunion of so many old friends, the laughter of recalling those hard working years they have spent together and stories to remember. Everyone went home with smile of gratitude and



content. So I realized that consecrated life is not because of seeing through the emptiness of the mortal world and to live a dull life; instead, there are so many wonderful matters waiting for me to search and to be challenged. A life full of flavor is waiting for me to taste and savor.

Let us pray and support for each other that in one faith and love of God, we step forward together for the kingdom of God.

Yes to God, Yes to people

Golden Jubilee of Sr. Maria Isabel de Menezes Lima



Sr. Silvia Corado do Amaral, smic

It was in a festive climate of joy and gratitude that Sr. Isabel celebrated her Golden Jubilee on January 23rd 2016. Pituba was the chosen place because of its history that took place during times that were so challenging. Of these 50 years, 16 were lived in Pituba serving 28 communities. At the Mass of Thanksgiving, Sr. Isabel using words understandable to the people who were present in the assembly, renewed her yes. A YES to God and a YES to the people:

Before you all, gathered in the Church as the people loved by God and in the presence of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, Bishop Itamar Vian, Father Cláudio Nogueira and Fr. Gildázio Sampaio, legitimate representatives of the Church, I confirm my YES, pronounced for the first time 50 years ago. For this reason, with much joy I renew my vows of poverty renewing my commitment to live in simplicity and in the service of my brothers and sisters, especially those most needy. I also renew my vow of chastity which is total giving of myself to the same Lord of life who won my heart. Finally, I renew my vow of obedience which consists

in doing the will of God in accordance with the Rule of the Third Order of St. Francis and the Constitutions of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God.

Concluding, Bishop Itamar said: “Sister Isabel, if you observe all of this, I promise you in the name of God and the Church that you will have life eternal”. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen!

Silver Jubilee Celebrating Sr. Teresinha dos Santos



by Sr. Marta Helena de Carvalho

It is with joy that we celebrated the Silver Jubilee of our Sr. Teresinha dos Santos, on February 2 in the Dom Amando Convent of Salvador- BA in the presence of her family, friends and Sisters of the Province

A very festive day is significant, above all for our Jubilarian. We began with a morning waking that was festive with much singing from the women in formation; at 9 AM there was the Eucharistic celebration which was lovely and well attended and where our Sister renewed her YES to God and to God's people after which a delicious meal was served.

We praise God for your 25 years of consecrated life to God and for your self giving to the most needy. We also praise God for your being part of the SMIC family. Congratulations Sr. Terezinha! Joy!

Golden Jubilee and First Profession of Vows

Five Novices, from left to right, Laetitia Tran, Rita Tran, Regina Nguyen, Rosa Dao and Agatha Tra made their first Profession of Vows on February 11, 2016 at the Chapel of the Provincialate, Asia Province.



Srs. Fidelia Chen and Veronica Lee celebrated their 50 years Jubilee of their profession of vows; relatives, friends and students were invited.



Bishop Bosco Lin of Tainan Diocese celebrated the Mass, and six priests, one from the Diocese, and five from different orders(society of OFM, SVD, OP and SJ) co-celebrated the Eucharist. It is indeed a blessed day for our Congregation.



Perpetual Vows in the Belém Province

Sister Jacinta de Fatima Cruz and Aparecida Carlos professed perpetual vows in Caninde, Ceara creating a most joyful celebration for the Belem province and Congregation.



Sr. Aparecida and Sr. Jacinta
(left to right)



Adding to the joy was the presence of Poor Clare Sister Catarina, twin sister to Sister Jacinta, who was able to join the celebration.

Congratulations to all celebrating special days.

*Dance as though no one is watching you,
Love as though you have never been hurt before,
Sing as though no one can hear you,
Live as though heaven is on earth.*

source unknown



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