

...our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.



Art by
Sr. Nancy
Earle, SMIC

“Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs” (Pope Francis, Encyclical Laudato Si, n 1)

MOSAIC II, 2015

Laudato Si

Sr. Janice Jolin, smic

The latest encyclical by Pope Francis is a revolutionary and ground breaking call for action for the good of our Mother Earth. This call to dialogue extends far beyond the confines of the Catholic Church to the whole world because every single person is maker and taker of the world's development and its demise. Thus all are needed to advocate for and make life style changes that will bring about the radical changes required of us to protect and reverence this God-gift to the world.

The vernacular title of the encyclical is "Praised Be You, my Lord!" a title well known to us in the Franciscan family as St. Francis' Canticle of the Sun. Pope Francis uses the Canticle by way of reminding us –as did St. Francis, that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us." (n.1)

Continuing the church tradition to address the environmental effects of the world today, a tradition begun by St. John Paul II and

Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis has gone one step further, he has begun a discussion between faith and reason by presenting a "seamless garment of creation" dialogue. Thus all stages of life are to be protected bringing the conversation from that of plants and animals to that of embryonic development of the human person. Pope Francis says: " the acceptance of our bodies as God's gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home". This is opposed to a thinking that "we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies which turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation" (n 155). He further insists that every human being is of a worth that goes beyond his or her stage of development thereby refuting justification for abortion: "how can we genuinely teach the importance of concern for other vulnerable beings, however troublesome or inconvenient they may be, if we fail to protect a human embryo even when its presence is uncomfortable and creates difficulties?" (n 120).

By placing this holistic message of ecology and its fundamental relationship with anthropology in his encyclical, Pope Francis has stepped outside of internal Church issues to engage a conversation with the broader world. The encyclical has already provoked many reactions from political, economic and religious leaders all over the world.

In reading the encyclical we can find some major themes to focus our reading. Below are those pointed out by Jesuit theologian James Martin, SJ:

1. Spiritual perspective is now part of the discussion on the environment
2. The poor are more affected by climate change than others
3. Christian spirituality is about less and not more; happiness is possible with moderation
4. The Environment is now part of Catholic social teaching
5. Discussion on ecology can be grounded in the Bible and church tradition
6. Everything is connected, including the economy
7. Scientific research on the environment is to be praised and used.

8. Indifference and selfishness worsen environmental problems
9. Global dialogue and solidarity are needed
10. A metanoia-change of heart- is required

May we be eager joiners in this opportunity to actively advocate our Father Francis' Canticle of Creation following always in the footsteps of Jesus.

Laudato Si in practice: bringing the message of the just use of water to those most in need

Franciscans International Advocates Water as a Human Right

UPDATE: On May 7th, 621 organizations collectively representing billions of people globally issued a joint letter to United Nations Member States urging them to include the fundamental right to water and sanitation in the Declaration of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Franciscan organizations from Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, the United States, and Uruguay have signed the letter.



Franciscans International (FI) has been defending water as a **key right for development** since the beginning of the Sustainable Developmental Goals negotiations. At the beginning of May, FI joined the Mining Working Group and other civil society organizations in advocating for the right to water to be explicitly included in the post-2015 Agenda.

The zero draft document, which was released in early June, does not contain any reference to the human right to water and sanitation. The new Sustainable Developmental Goals are set to be adopted in September 2015 and FI will continue advocating for the human right to water and sanitation to be included in the post-2015 Agenda, so that the agenda better reflects the reality and needs of the 780 million people lacking access to clean drinking water and the two billion without adequate sanitation.

Your prayers are needed to soften the hearts of country leaders to act justly!

Mission: Serve and expect nothing

Sr. Maria Lúcia Dias Romualdo

I am sharing with you a bit of my experience in the African land of Angola. Remember that Africa is a large continent, similar so to speak of a grand mother with 53 sons. Each country has its own culture, customs, values, rites. Angola has 43 official languages and each one has other subdivisions. For 5½ years now our Congregation is part of the Archdiocese of Malange in the north of Angola. We three Sisters were all from Brazil. We are engaged in health care, education, catechesis and evangelization in general.



The war left many consequences, poverty is great and there are serious problems in education. 70% of the population are unable to read or write. This, because 60% of the population are children and 50% are without schooling because of lack of birth certificates, teaching is weak and antiquated. There are children in the 5th and 6th grade levels that do not know how to read well. We visit the villages (areas distant from the city, where help comes from canoes, motorcycles). We have to negotiate the land mines that although are quiet violently react when activated. The difficulty to arrive in these places makes it difficult for the people to have work that sustains life...the majority of the people live by agriculture and making charcoal. Produce is unable to be sold because of the precariousness of the roads. The cost of living is very high because many items are imported. Today we see an initiative so that the country produces its own food investing in agriculture.

A beautiful religious value of the people's daily life is morning prayer where the people come to church to pray the Liturgy of the Hours. The preciousness of the psalms followed by the participation in the Mass. You can imagine how the celebration is on Sundays. It is a feast celebrating the memory of Jesus Christ with local songs in their native tongue, an infinity of languages...and the dances in the entrance and offertory processions, etc.! The choirs have a specific mission to animate the celebrations. The Bibles hasn't even reached the hands of the people. It is an expensive item and is in need of creating an awareness about it.

Caring for the body and for the soul are important. The life of the people is difficult. Typhoid fever is rampant due to lack of drinking water and even water for daily hygiene is insufficient passing contamination from person to person.



Another frequent illness is AIDS. Many people are carriers of the HIV virus. The most frequent cause is polygamy and conjugal infidelity, active sexual activity outside of marriage and also numerous blood transfusions used to save children and anemic adults. Accompanying Aids is tuberculosis which is rather frequent. These illnesses are the most common without mentioning malaria. The health centers belonging to Religious Sisters have more resources to attend people. The centers of the State lack running water and electricity and equipment to make a deeper diagnosis to better attend the majority of persons.

For me it is a great joy to be able to share the richness of this multicultural experience. All of this finds its basis in the life of daily personal and community prayer. The sharing of experience, joys and difficulties help us to grow in faith and in the love for the mission which Christ has given us.

To be missionary is to live a little of the challenge of the incarnation which only Jesus fully lived, to live immersed in the culture of the other and to acculturate oneself slowly listening to learn with them the values of faith. It is to be as witnesses present to listen, learn from them and happy and committed that it is not important what I do, but more important how I do it and without pretense.

Pray for us SMIC en Angola so that we may always be more encouraged and that one day many sisters can prepare themselves to also leave for lands unknown offering love, the passion of Jesus Christ to so many who wait to hear the word of God.

Africa, our Dear Mother

I have the pleasure to share in a general way, a bit of my missionary experience in Malanje / Angola. This was my first Missionary experience in a land other than my own.

Africa has many similarities to some of our states in the northeast of Brazil, principally in Bahia, my native land.

When I arrived I didn't feel much of a difference; the similarity that existed facilitated my adaptation to this country.

Sr. Nelísia Rodrigues de Jesus, smic



The SMIC Mission is located in the Katepa Parish of the Archdiocese of Malange. It is administered by the OFM Friars who are almost all Brazilians. This contributed to a good relationship and development of pastoral work.

As soon as we arrived here we were presented to the Parishioners of the Parish of Uganda Martyrs during the Sunday Liturgy which was very nice. There was great joy both on our side and on the side of the people. They are happy and welcoming! They love to sing and dance. On that day, we perceived a ray of joy in the look of each one. This profoundly moved me. It expressed what was deep down in my heart, "I am Angolan, I was born in Brazil but now God brought me to my home!".

And it happened that the time passed and the journey continued. I welcomed the happenings and the reality, serving and learning from those most in need. "The poor are our best teachers". (Sr. Teresa of Calcutta). Today, after five years of this journey with our Angolan brothers I learned much from them, principally the joy and gift of welcoming. I confess with all sincerity that this was one of the deepest experiences in pastoral work that I ever experienced in my Consecrated Life. I consider it a second vocational call; the first was when I had the courage to leave my parents' home and go to the Convent. The second was here in Angola, this great gift from God.

In the Katepa parish where we live, there is daily Eucharist with the recitation of Laudes by the Missionaries and the whole assembly. Besides the specific work of each one, forming teams for pastoral work with Sisters of other Congregations enriched us and helped us tremendously.

Besides parochial works that were asked of me during these five years which included animating the people in the villages, I assumed the Direction of the St. Anthony School which is a Catholic mission school of Katepa constructed by the OFM Friars.



This experience was very good! I liked it very much and I dedicated myself totally to the bettering the students. The students that study there are children of farmers and the majority are not able to read or write.

The students are disciplined and welcoming, really needy of all. They merit our love and support; all that we did in benefit of them is still only little.

The teachers who work at the School are all young and have children, as needy as the students. They receive a low salary and often this comes late. But even so, work with joy and together with the School administration try to meet the goals set.

The parents of the students really have been a great support for our educational work. When we ask their help, they are present and with a good disposition.

When we visit the villages for religious celebrations, we are received as in a feast. All the people come singing and dancing to greet the missionaries. The African music with its sounds and rhythm is contagious to our hearts. There are sad and joyful songs, bitter ones and some full of humor about work, life and hope.

I want to first thank God and the Congregation which gave me this opportunity!

Besides being among a people who are victims of poverty experiencing all types of need, hunger, affection, education and principally hunger for the Word of God, the mission was very gratifying and enriching. It was not burdensome or suffering but a font which satisfies.

For this I confess that it was worth it! The mission nourishes, strengthens even with its difficulties.

May our Blessed Mother, the great missionary of God teach us to be faithful to our missionary commitments in defense of life.

Regional Ministry: An Amiable Face



Clementia Wang, smic

In the book *Sail on the Boat*, Mother Immaculate says, "Whether we serve each other inside the community or outside the community, our faces represent God's image. In order to let others recognize Christ on our faces, I hope everybody obtains an amiable face" (Page Nu.)

After the first Regional Chapter in Philippines, every sister in the Region actively made their own choice to participate in different Congregational ministries in the different countries. During the past few months, everybody

followed the vow of obedience to embark on each new mission. I am no exception. The ministry that I now have is different from the ones that I had in the past. My mission focuses on ministry outside of the community instead of inside, and more importantly, it is one of collaboration with the Sisters of Christian Charity (SCC). This mission embodies what Pope Francis says, "Going out, cooperating and sharing with other Congregations." From the Chapter's closing, we immediately moved to carry on this call.

Sr. Regina Liu is coordinator of our mission in Margaretha Home for the Blind in Manila. I am learning and experiencing the life there. After the Chapter in January, Srs. Regina, Veronica, Michelle, Cecilia, Clementia, and our aspirant Chuanying Zhang went to the SCC community to discuss how to begin this new mission. The General Coordinator of SCC and



the two sisters, Sr. Theresa Barkey (German) and Sr. Maria Dlores Tan (Chinese, Filipino, and American), who have served there for years, facilitated the meeting which went smoothly.

I formally started this new mission on March 3rd. I live with the two SCC sisters. We pray and work together as well as share life. My biggest challenge of this mission is the English language. Miraculously, I am not defeated by my limitation and am willing to accept it and continuously learn because I want to serve with a humble heart. I believe God will do the rest for me.



Time flies! I am happy to already be here for five months. I always want to show others an amiable face, just as Mother Immaculata teaches us. I have learned a lot from both the sisters and the children. About the SCCs.: Sr. Theresa Barkey is 67 years old. Sr. Maria Dlores Tan is 65 years old. Although she has Chinese blood in her veins, she does not speak Chinese at all. Twenty years ago, both of them came here for the mission without knowing each other. Until today, they have worked for twenty years with an open heart and great understanding toward each other.

Even though I do not belong to the SCCs, they treat me as one of them. They touch me deeply because I feel simplicity and an open heart enable us to live a happy life in God.

In Margaretha Home for the Blind, the children who have no disabilities go to public schools; some of them even go to College. The children with disabilities (blind or intellectually disabilities) stay at home with a housemother to learn some basic living skills, attend workshops, or take some arts and craft classes. The home accommodates fifteen girls; three people share one room with each room having a housemother. The girls, who are partially blind, are a big help because they are able to take care of others. God's love is revealed vividly in this family.

I also have learned a lot from the interactive communication between the sisters and the staff. They not only show respect also have feelings of trust toward each other. If there is a problem needed to be solved, the sisters will oftentimes adopt what the staff suggests because they work with the children every single day; they are indigenous people and understand the culture better than the sisters do. While playing the role of guidance and facilitating, the sisters put full trust in the staff members and give them authority to run the institution. This is a great motivation and encouragement for the staff to build a sense of responsibility. It is the trust

among the children, the sisters, and the staff that creates the atmosphere of love in Margaretha Home. At this point, a good example will be the interview of a new child today. After being acquainted with the facts about the child, the staff will evaluate and make the final decision instead of the sisters. Thus, the sense of trust that the sisters put in the staff promotes the sense of mission and responsibility.

Everybody rejoices when a new child becomes one of us. Although most of the girls are not able to see what a new child looks like, they still can feel her through their sharp perceptions and their fingertips. Their hands, facial expression, and the body language become the avenue for them to express their love and acceptance to the new member.

During this short period, I feel it is not I serving others, but each of them serving me. Because of their sense of acceptance and generosity toward our Congregation and myself, I am learning to give, pray, and love. The cooperation and mutual sharing with another Congregation broadens our horizons and help us to cultivate a tender heart.

Brazilian "Summer Mission of Thirst"

"Go, cure the sick and bring the Good News and Peace."

Lagoa do Mato Mission- Diocese de Quixadá, Ceará – (July 3-6, 2015)



Ana Lucia Perreira, smic

It was in this spirit that I placed myself in the mission trusting in God's grace that was already on the way. I brought joy, enthusiasm, faith, a heart of welcome and listening to those who Jesus placed on my path and it was a beautiful experience.

It is clearer to me that the enthusiasm and joy of our being Consecrated is strengthened in our openness to give of

ourselves to others.

The people are **thirsty for a word** that energizes them to see what God is already doing in their midst;

The people are **thirsty for a missionary with whom to share their problems**, listen to them with their heart;

The people are **thirsty for someone to bring joy, hope** that is contagious and brings them out of the daily doldrums, cruel routine and that can bring a smile, relaxation, and can celebrate life seeing God mixed in its pains and celebrations.

The people are **thirsty that the youth awaken** to push out with courage without letting the dreams or their inner strengths die.



Literally, Jesus blessed this mission with rain as there had been no rain in the region for one year and the people shouted that Jesus sent rain because of the mission. We thank all the SMICs and lay persons who shared our charism through their collaboration in its various forms. May the Lord send workers into the vineyard.

US House of Studies closes a Chapter of Service

“There is an appointed time for everything and season for every activity under the heavens”
(Ecc 3:1)

Sr. Sheila Madden, smic



Now is the time for all of us to thank God for the past 11 years of being able to provide some of our young student sisters the opportunity to live in the International House of Studies here in the US. This has given our congregation the opportunity to grow in a broader perspective and understanding of our internationality. The experience of sharing the richness of the African, Asian and Brazilian cultures, and life styles has been a blessing, not only to the students but too many of our sisters in the US.

Being able to be a part of this community for these past years has been a wonderful growth experience for me. We have been able to bridge language, personality and

cultural barriers and to build community life in a way many felt would not be possible. The generous and willing spirit of all the students over these years has made this a dream a reality!

Now we ask God to continue to bless our young sisters' throughout the world with the same blessings. May they have the strength to go forth and do "what is theirs to do".

We, in the US thank all of you sisters, throughout the Congregation, for your encouragement and support given to us over these past years



Photo taken Jan 10, 2010

Workshop of Consecrated Life

by Asia Formation Team

In response to the Apostolic Letter of Pope Francis on the Occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life, the Provincial Formation Team conducted a whole day workshop on June 20 from morning until 6pm (by

supper time, each one brought a “rice bar” home). The venue was in our Sheng Kung Hospital. All the 40 participants were divided into five groups. The five groups were led by a member of the Formation Team: Sr. Catherine Kuo, Agnes Lee and Catharina Tien, plus Sr. Veronica Lee from the Region and Sr. Benedicta Kuo, the Provincial Coordinator.

The morning and most of the afternoon sessions were engaged in group sharing. The topics were about the Aims of the Year of Consecrated Life: look to the past with gratitude, to live the present with passion and to embrace the future with hope; the expectations for the Year of Consecrated Life; and the horizons of the Year of Consecrated Life. The formation team already set concrete directions for all the Sisters to reflect upon our own experiences.

We did go back to the vision, ideals, spirit, spiritual heritages and charism of our founder and foundress, recall from the living history of oneself or our fore-sisters on how the dynamics/joy were manifest or passing through death to life. We shared about how we were attracted to Consecrated life and the hindrance to our prophetic role as well as to our being “experts in communion”. We also shared what we have heard/seen those we serve asking for us. And at last, based on what we have shared/discussed, what concrete actions could be actualized in our community, apostolate institute or association, in order to renew our consecrated life.

There are two things worth mention: Srs. Amata Wang and Angela Chen, though not feeling very well, came to be with us, and shared some of their living experiences and touching stories with our fore-sisters which we never have even heard or known. And all shared stories were recorded, hopefully could be collected and handled for future writing of our history. Isn't it very meaningful and important to do so!?

The lunch break was a time of joy and communion, while we watched the projected pictures on few Mainland China's trip, Sr. Amata Wang from her living quarter came to be with.



The last session was that each group designed a short play or program based on Gospel or living experiences to express what we want to be renewed or actualized in our religious life.





By 6pm, the Sisters went back home with grateful heart and sense of fulfillment.

One final thing we want to mention here is that this formation activity was initiated by the Lourdes Region formation directress, Sr. Veronica Lee. This almost similar workshop was also held in the Philippines and Vietnam. In addition, we have continuous plans maybe with the same style on Pope Francis' other Apostolic letters.

Province Celebrations

in Namibia

DIAMOND JUBILEE of SISTER ANSGARDIS DIERKES "60 years"

THE LORD HAS FILLED MY HEART WITH JOY (Sam 2:1)



Sr. Ansgardis

On May 31st 2015 we celebrated a special feast for the sisters in Aminuis, where Sr. Ansgardis was celebrating her diamond jubilee and Sr. Jutta was celebrating 45 years of service in Aminuis. Fr. Benjamin Sheelongo and the parish parish council organized the event. Most of the young women and men raised in Aminuis were students known to the Sisters and these came to celebrate with the two sisters. In gratitude for the work done by the Sisters, they helped with the preparation of the

celebration. One young lady beautifully decorated the dinning hall and the church. Sr. Johanna Ndjaula

helped a lot in preparation and accommodation for 17 sisters and novices. She led the activities in the kitchen and welcomed all the visitors.

On Saturday afternoon, before the big feast the students of Mokaleng school led a concert and cultural dance outside the house .

On Sunday the 31th, Holy Mass began at 9 am with Archbishop Liborius Nashenda OMI as the main celebrant together with Fr. Jean Piere Yambong from Gobabis, Fr. Lukas Mosemedi from Windhoek and Fr. Benjamin the parish priest. The two deacons, Gaowetse and Ignatius were also present.

During the homily the archbishop addressed Sister Ansgardis : Dear sister we celebrate with you today, and having listened to the word of God, today we are thanking God with you as you celebrate the journey of your call, the journey of sanctification, of faith, of growing closer to the Lord and the journey of knowing that without God you are nothing in your life and in need of expressing your continuous dependency on God.

You started the journey of being immersed in the mystery of the trinity, the mystery of God 60 years ago, serving God through suffering . Dear sister you perservered, every day you prayed for the grace to fulfill the will of God. There are always things to discover, we cannot say I have got everything. God invites us to learn to discover more and more about the mystery of God, to be ready to share our faith. The Trinity is not something to learn but to experience. One's life should always be a discovering.

For 60 years you responded to God's seaching authority as the apostle did today in the Gospel, go into the world and preach my Gospel. You did it also in the spirit of humility, in the spirit of dedication. You heard the voice of love to serve others selflessly therefore you left your country to serve others. In humility you have worked with dedication and silently. Today with the whole community of Aminuis, the SMIC congregation and the local church gives thanks for your spirit of perseverance and faithfulness. We say thank you that her example inspired our life us young people and that the young people of today can follow her example to give their life to God. Thank you Sr. Ansgardis because you are gift to the Church and to the Congregation.

In Asia :

9 Sisters Celebrated their Diamond and Golden Jubilee

The Eucharistic Celebration was held on August 15 at 4pm in the chapel of our St. Joseph Hospital by Fr. Lopes, SVD, about 50 Sisters attended. Considering some of the Jubilarians' health condition, we limited the celebration just for and among our own Sisters.

A banquet was followed at a nearby sea food restaurant. Songs were sung, music was played, and good memories of the good old days that the Sisters worked together setting up sound mission foundation of the Holy Name of Jesus Province.....were recalled. All the Sisters enjoyed the precious time of communion. They are:

Front from right: **Golden Jubilee:** Srs. Ambrosia Hsu, Antonia Cheng, **Diamond Jubilee:** Srs. A Mata Wang, Jubilata Lin, Ancilina Yang, Viola Shu

Back from right: **Golden Jubilee:** Srs. Margareta Lin, Dominica Zhang, Martha Huang,



*Latest 2015 Chapter Elections
CONGRATULATIONS !!!*

GERMANY



Sisters Franziska Mayer, Andrea Lubberdink and Rita Bee

NAMIBIA



Sisters Klara Oaes, Beatrix Mokwena, Cecilia Negandgo

News from Germany...

Sister Death visits an esteemed SMIC colleague and friend: Fr. Beda Vickermann, OFM

Fr. Bede was born at Opherdicke/ district of Unna, and on August 1st, 1956 he joined the Franciscan order. After studying theology in Brazil he was ordained a priest in Salvador on the 22nd of July 1962.

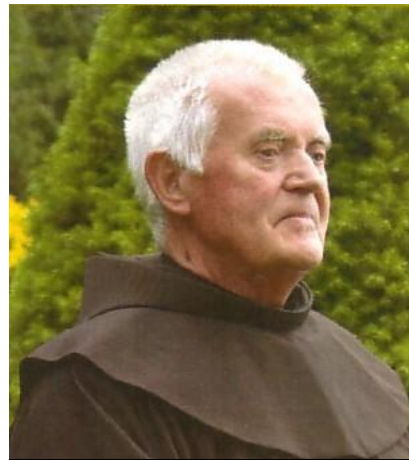
Returning to Germany, he started charitable works for the people in Brazil. By his enthusiasm he was attracted people from all walks of life to support Brazil. He worked tirelessly and selflessly deriving joy from his option for the poor.

The living conditions of the people in the Brazilian northeast became his own way of life deeply impacting his work. In this way he created manifold connections and gave witness to the faith. Fr. Beda was the living example of a Christian giving “bread” to many people, and proving that in the end love is all that counts.

In 2003 Fr. Beda received the Bundesverdienstkreuz (a distinction granted by the president of the Federal Republic of Germany for outstanding services).

A Brazilian partner writes:

In the beginning we were a mere little plant
so small and weak,
the slightest breeze
made us sway back and forth
as if it was a thundering storm.
When you, Fr. Beda, suddenly came to us,
we realized that an extraordinary shadow
covered our heads and
brought joy, refreshment
and hope to us.
Everything that was small before became big,
everything that stood for starvation and death
changed into life,
everything that had no roof over the head
changed into a home.
Dear friend Fr. Beda,
of all who had the privilege
to get to know you, our heartfelt thanks.
Because for us you never came,
you never left.
For us you will stay forever.



Fr. Beda Vickermann OFM
born 12/24/1934 .
deceased 08/16/2015.

Other News...

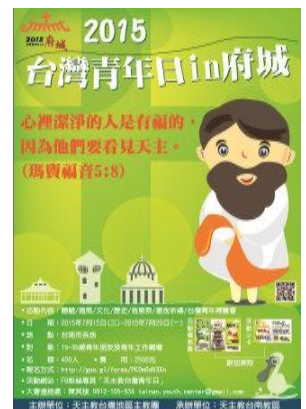
In Germany

Twenty years ago the Elisabeth-Tombrock–House in Ahlen was established. To celebrate, Mrs. Troester invited us to attend. Both Sr. Franziska and I attended the commemoration.

In Taiwan

Taiwan Youth Day

Taiwan Youth Day (TYD), a youth-oriented Catholic Church event in Taiwan, was organized by Youth Desk of Bishops' Conference in Taiwan. Seven dioceses in Taiwan



take turns to arrange the event. In the beginning in 2004, it was held once every three years. Then in 2008, it was changed to once a year. This year from July 15 to July 20, the TYD was held in Tainan Deguang Catholic High School, with the theme: "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God." (Mt. 5:8)

During this week, through prayers, faith sharing, lectures, workshops, and exposures young adults were being enriched in their spiritual and personal development. They were expected that they might discover and renew their faith and respond to proclaim the Word of the Lord.

Our Sisters were invited to lead a prayer service in the evening of July 17. A Taize Prayer was prepared by Sr. Catharina Tien, Novice Directress, and was executed by all our Junior Sisters, Novices, and Pre-novice, joined by our other Sisters. After much practice, the evening prayer was very successful; the atmosphere was serene and harmonious. They themselves enjoyed the event very much. After the prayer, there was time to get to know some of the participants who were from different places, even from China.



The students from our Sheng Kung Girls' High School also served as volunteers to this wonderful Catholic Youth Day (TYD).



IFC-TOR

International Franciscan Conference- Third Order Regular

Sr. Livramento Melo, smic

The International Conference of the Institutes and Monasteries of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis, also known as the IFC-TOR, was established in 1989. The decision to establish this Conference came from the members of the general assembly that approved the revision of the TOR Rule in 1982. Their wish was to set up a permanent structure that would ensure the continuation of the cooperation achieved through the drafting of the Rule, as well as to represent the institutes and monasteries of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis in the Church, with the Franciscan family and the world.

Actually, the Conference has more than 200 active Institutes members from throughout the world.

A General Assembly is held every four years, in Assisi, in which a council formed by six members is elected. At the 2013 General Assembly, I was elected one of the Council members representing the Portuguese and Spanish language countries, although I'm living in the USA. Besides the General Assembly and the council that meets once a year, there is a secretariat and a finance office in Rome.



After two years and three meetings of the IFC-TOR council I would like to share some of our achievement and my own experience:

- a) We are seeking ways to be more connected with the national Franciscan Conferences, and other Franciscan Institutions.
- b) The Conference is publishing an annual online bulletin that is deepening the 2013 General Assembly Statement. The Statement is to be developed in four

years. So, each year the members of the Conference have been asked to write articles about how their Congregations are living out the specific part of the statement of that year. For 2016 the theme is *“Living the Gospel Interculturally”* and 2017 is *“Responding in the Margins of Society”*.

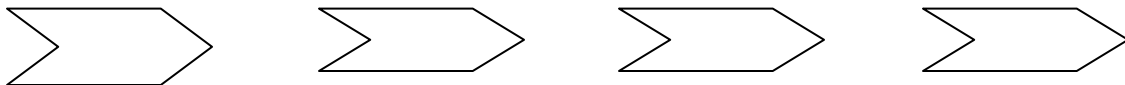
- c) Realizing that the Conference has been functioning in the red since the last term, we have been working to simplify the Conference structure and make it less expensive, in order to be able to implement some recommendations from the 2013 General Assembly.

Regarding my own experience:

- ✓ It has broadened my vision and understanding of the Franciscan Family throughout the world;
- ✓ Through the sharing with members of other international Franciscan Congregations, it helps me to see clearly and value even more our Congregational journey and achievements since Vatican II, such as to strive to live and lead in a participative model.
- ✓ However, sometimes I also feel disappointed because my view is that we are not doing enough to implement the General Assembly recommendations. Some of the reasons are: several of the council members are the leaders of large Congregations, and so there is not much time to dedicate to the service of the Conference; The Conference does not have enough money to be use in programs such as the itinerant schools that was held in the past in different countries: Brazil, Croatia, Kenya, India.

I would like to encourage those of you that use computers and the internet to look at the IFC-TOR website for more information at <http://www.ifc-tor.org> The website has three of our Congregational languages: English, German and Portuguese. Let us be connected even more with a larger number of the Franciscan Family throughout the world.

NB. Read the latest PROPOSITUM website magazine on the Care for Creation, a collection of articles submitted by many congregations including our own: *“Affirming God’s Gift of Brotherhood/Sisterhood.”*



EGCM 2015

We ask for your prayers for our next Extended Council Meeting which will take place in the United States from September 30th to October 4th. The items we are discussing are:

- **Congregational Restructuring-** to work on the material submitted by the Congregational Restructuring Team –CRT, by the Provinces and Region since the 2014 EGCM, as well as to decide on the next steps to be taken before the General Chapter of 2016.
- **2016 General Chapter** – preparation process including the format for the chapter as a whole, calendar and theme. Besides this, we will discuss the questions regarding observers (who, number and function).

Please pray that we are guided by the Holy Spirit and can thus share, hear and understand one another during this meeting.

Your Sisters at the Generalate

Don't miss out on the SMIC Facebook carrying up- to-date photos and news of our Sisters near and far!

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