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Final Editing: Karien Janssen-Schwiebbe

Reflection by Sr Hermin Bu'ulölö

Recently, we have been shocked by some horrific events, with three churches in Indonesia attacked by suicide bombers. These brutal attacks destroyed so much in just moments. Sometimes I ask myself, what meaning does life have? Do values still exist?

Such diversity of backgrounds, character, culture, nations and value systems can at times give rise to fear and difficulty in understanding others. This often happens in society and also in communities.

"We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" (Acts 2:11). What is the meaning of celebrating Pentecost, the day of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, when the world is full of fear and violence? The Holy Spirit encourages us to step outside ourselves and reach out to others. We come from various nations with their own languages and cultures, with diversity of background, character and value systems. Often, we are busy doing our work, focused on tasks, pastoral duties or even just enjoying hobbies. God is involved in this and pays attention to our every step. So, if it were not for our lives, our daily work, the worries, sadness and joy would have no meaning and simply revert to nothing.

Last week, we celebrated the Holy Trinity, the three divine persons who are unique but live in the fellowship of love. We are also created to be unique individuals, but we are designed to be persons who live with others and for each other. With differences in culture, there is opportunity to learn about other cultures and the richness they offer. This is a chance to deepen our understanding of Gospel values, tolerance, dialogue and reconciliation. Living in communities makes us to grow in sensitivity and knowledge and to develop a greater understanding of life and other cultures.

The need of the moment is not one religion, but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of different religions.

M. K. Gandhi

CWMG, Vol. XXV, p. 179

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Provincial chapter Belgium

Sr Hermin and Sr Dorine attended the provincial chapter in Belgium. They enjoyed a lovely sunny week during which the sisters gathered in a picturesque castle. The fruit trees were fully in bloom in the surrounding area. The atmosphere of the chapter was positive as well and the discussions took place in a relaxed mood. Shortly before the date of the chapter the house in Borgloon had been sold to the municipality. That was one worry less for the Belgian sisters. The election of two new council members went well and there was a large consensus.

In the last Briefing you may have read that Sr Marie-Louise Aerts has been re-elected as the provincial superior. She will be assisted by Sr Annie Timmers who already knows everything there is to know and by a new council member, Sr Marie Jeanne Teuwen.

We would like to wish this new council a lot of success.



All chapter members and their facilitator. The second, third and fourth person in front (from left to right) Sr Marie Jeanne Teuwen, Sr Marie-Louise Aerts and Sr Annie Timmers.

Working visit to the UK/Ireland

The General Council visits the sisters in the English/Irish province every year during their province days that take place in the summer. Because this coincided with their planned working visit to Indonesia Sr Dorine and Sr Josephine travelled to Pantasaph at an earlier date in April.



Sr Dorine (far left on the back row) and Sr Josephine (far right on the back row) with the sisters in Pantasaph.

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The English/Irish province still consists of nine sisters, five of whom live in Bryn Mair, Pantasaph (Wales, UK). The other four sisters are Irish. Because of changes in the healthcare legislation in the UK, Bryn Mair is no longer a care home, but a community. This transition from home to community requires a lot of attention from the sisters. Not only in the interest of the sisters, but also because the change will have consequences for the staff.

In 2019 the English/Irish province was to hold a chapter. In view of the number of remaining sisters and the administrative capacity this is no longer possible and the English/Irish province will become a post-province. The preparations to effect this change are already in process.

In spite of the changes taking place, the two general council members enjoyed the discussions with the sisters during their stay.

Working visit to Timor Leste



During their working visit to Timor Leste at the beginning of this year, Sr Hermin and Sr Elisângela realised that the sisters could do with a little extra support. Timor Leste is young part of the Congregation and during the setting-up phase a lot needs to be organised to ensure that things will run smoothly in the future. Therefore the General Council worked on this together with the sisters for a few weeks. On 20 April Sr Elisângela left for Dili. From there she travelled on to

Ossu. She remained there for an entire week in order to be able to help the sisters. They had constructive discussions and when she left for Dili after a week, she left the sisters in a positive frame of mind.

Sr Elisângela also spent a week as a guest in the formation house. She taught the young sisters the basics of the Portuguese language. As a matter of fact, language is a problem on Timor Leste. The official bodies and the authorities communicate in Portuguese, as this is the official language of the country. Many of the 'ordinary' people speak Tetun, a dialect that is not officially recognised. In addition, a part of the population speaks yet another dialect. In the past when Timor Leste was still part of Indonesia, the population spoke Indonesian, but that language is not really in use anymore.



During her last week and a half Sr Elisângela gave her time to the sisters in Dili. Here she also had very good conversations with the sisters and they worked out specific agreements. There was also some time for relaxation, which of course benefitted the atmosphere in the group.

Sr Elisângela spent wonderful but also very tiring weeks and looks back at this time with a feeling of happiness. The General Council is now considering the follow-up for this visit.

SEDOS-meeting



Sr Josephine attended the SEDOS-meeting that took place in Rome (April 30 to May 4). It was an international meeting on the theme 'Young People and Mission'. It was a fascinating and enriching experience and also renewing oneself. Each day has its specific topics with different speakers. On Young People, on Evangelisation (the role and challenges of Evangelisation for the youth in the multicultural and pluralistic world of today) on Vocation Discernment (Vocation and Formation for young people). There were also follow-up discussions and sharing among the various small groups. The formation was also emphasized and the participants shared their experiences about formation on how to update and incorporate the signs of the times. The need for the continuation of mutual connectedness between the old and the young.

Young people may learn from the experiences and wisdom from the older people, whereas the older people should listen to the young of our time. A dialogue may tear down boundaries as long as both parties are open for changes.



Vincentian pilgrimage

The Vincentian pilgrimage has started again. In the framework of the preparations for the profession for life, five young sisters from Indonesia are spending three weeks to get acquainted with the founder of the Congregation, Mgr Zwijsen and its patron, Vincent de Paul. These sisters are Sr Lestiana Dhue, Sr Maureen Delu Kaka, Sr Marsiana Haghe, Sr Germana Ndraha and Sr Michaella Bahan. Sr Elisângela will accompany them as representative of the General Council.

In addition to the SCMM sisters, fifteen CMM brothers will participate. Two PMY sisters will join them when they set off for France. During their first week in Tilburg, the participants will get a better understanding of the social and societal context of both Msgr Zwijsen and Vincent de Paul. On 3 June they will all leave for France to follow in the footsteps of Vincent de Paul. They will be back almost two weeks later. Then they will have a few more days to visit the sisters in the Home Mater Misericordiae and the generalate. On 20 June the five sisters will fly back to Indonesia.



Five young sisters searching for Msgr Zwijsen.

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Sisters who have died

Since 15 April (date of the last briefing) the following sisters have died:

17 April 2018	Sr Francina Janssens	Tilburg
10 May 2018	Sr Catharina M. van Siëna Suermondt	Tilburg
18 May 2018	Sr Geertrude van de Leur	Tilburg
25 May 2018	Sr Herma Boerland	Tilburg



Agenda for the coming months

Sr Dorine will be on holiday from 19 up to and including 30 June

On 22 June Srs Hermin, Elisângela and Josephine will attend the celebration of the 100th birthday of Sr Louise in Belgium. It is the first time in the Belgian province that a sister reaches the age of 100 years.

Sr Elisângela and Sr Josephine will attend the province days from 2-5 July in the USA. They depart on 1 July and will return on 9 July.

Sr Hermin and Sr Dorine will represent the General council during the provincial chapter in Indonesia, which takes place from 5-9 July. Brother Jan Koppens will accompany them to interpret for Sr Dorine. Following the chapter the two sisters will pay a working visit to Nias. On 3 August the sisters will be back.

A working visit to Brazil has been put on the programme in September. Sr Hermin and Sr Elisângela will attend the profession for life of Sr Joérica Kátia Melo on 23 September. On 24 September Sr Lestiana Dhue, Sr Maureen Delu Kaka, Sr Marsiana Haghe, Sr Germana Ndraha and Sr Michaella Bahan will also take their final vows in Indonesia.

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