

**December 2019, No. 6**

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Email address: [generalate@sistersofcharity.nl](mailto:generalate@sistersofcharity.nl)**Reflection by Sr Dorine Drost****A light for the world**

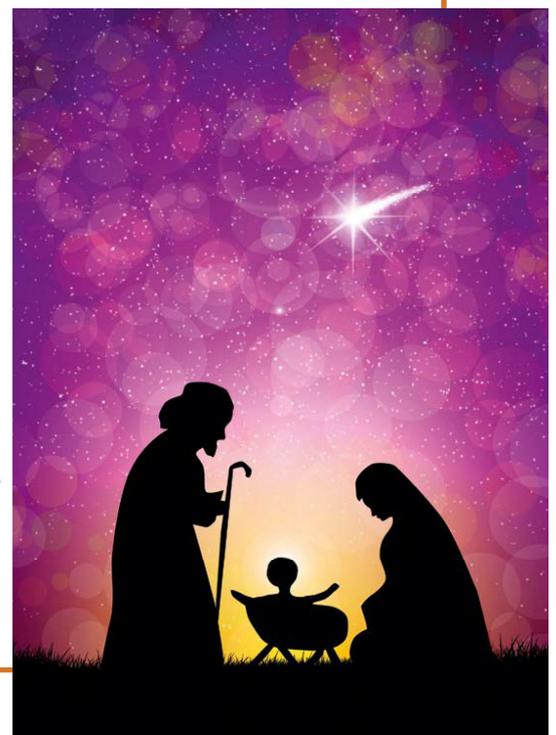
Advent has started again: we are on our way to Christmas. Wherever you live in the world, Christmas is a feast of lights everywhere: candles, lights near the Nativity scene, small lights in the Christmas tree, lights outside our house, and streets decorated with lights....

At Christmas we celebrate the arrival of Jesus. He has come as the light of the world, 'as the radiance of God's glory, Light of His Light' (creed). The best way to celebrate that is with a lot of light!

Jesus is for us a reflection of the Light of the Father. His entire life is a reflection of His light. And he also invites us into this light. And if we enter into His light, then His light will shine through us, like *Dag Hammarskjöld* expresses it so beautifully:

*All you are is light in a luminous flux.  
You may receive and give and possess—  
Like the lens receives the light, gives and possesses it, that is all.*

Sometimes we truly long for light in a dark world full of injustice and deceit, war and inequality. However, hope exists: *a light has appeared to us*. Are we ready to allow that light to penetrate into us like the lens captures all light and concentrates it, so that it is turned into a strong force? Do we wish to try to reflect this divine light, and become a small light for all those who are suppressed or persecuted, who are ignored and live in the margin of society? Will we become light bearers in this new year? No great and splendid deeds are expected of us, for even a very small light can make a world of difference in the pitch-dark!



Next year the general council will organise an ICC to reflect about our apostolate/our works of charity. Monseigneur Zwijsen was in particular concerned about the fate of the poor children. Let us -in remembrance of him- reflect about who in our immediate vicinity are those 'poor children' in our time.

Are we able to pass on to them some of the light that we ourselves have received? It may make a difference!

I wish you all a Christmas with a lot of light and let us pass that light on to one another.

### **ICB 2019**

Our yearly ICB meeting is finished again. All the sisters have returned home and have gone back to their daily routine. It was a significant meeting, which we won't be able to forget very easily.

The meeting started on Sunday 10 November with a celebration of the Eucharist in the chapel in ZIN. Afterwards, Sr Hermin welcomed everyone, and in particular those who had come for the first time: Sr Marie-Jeanne Teuwen from Belgium, Sr Joanita Freitas from Brazil and Mrs Helen Cross who together with Sr Nora Hayes represented the sisters from England/Ireland.

Sr Paula Frassinetti de Azevedo Soares attended for the first time in her new function as the provincial superior of Brazil.

In her introduction Sr Hermin emphasized the future, a common future. In the cycle of life light and dark alternate. You need to draw on both for hope and unity. For, even if the present might seem gloomy, we are working together towards a sunny future both for the parts going towards completion and those which are growing.



At each ICB-meeting we look back at the past year on the basis of an annual report. The general council tells us about their own experiences. (Post-pre) provinces are given the opportunity to elucidate the text of the annual report. Important events, like the ICC in Chicago in this instance are discussed in detail. In this way, everyone is informed about the ups-and-downs of each part of the congregation.

### *ICC 2019*

In August four countries, the USA, Brazil, the Philippines and Timor Leste, met together to get acquainted and to discuss interculturality and leadership to assess the possibility of cooperating. During that meeting the first step in the right direction has been taken, but the future asks for more. Sr Elisângela told us about the topics that had been discussed by means of a PowerPoint presentation. A number of recommendations were formulated during the meeting in Chicago. One of these recommendations was to enable the sisters to learn English, a common language. This is not only of importance for the four small parts, but also for the sisters in Indonesia. As the number of sisters decreases, the need for cooperation and understanding each other increases. Another recommendation was that it was advisable to have monthly contacts between the superiors of these four parts in order to exchange experiences and to allow them to get better acquainted. A third important wish expressed in Chicago is to organise a study centre in Chicago where the sisters may learn the English language and take courses about spirituality. In principle, all sisters from the congregation should be able to participate in this. In total there were eight recommendations, each of which were discussed in detail and this led to agreements.

For instance, it has been agreed that:

- It is very important to have a common language. Sisters will be enabled to learn the English language.
- A study house should be established in Chicago where courses could be organised about our spirituality and the English language. This sounds good, but is it feasible. Could it perhaps be organised in the Philippines?
- Sisters from the various countries could be sent to the other countries more often. They could go to learn a language, but also in order to carry out work. In that case a very good preparation is essential.
- The four countries that participated in the ICC in Chicago now have a group chat, which bridges the distances and enables them to have regular contacts and even hold meetings.

- Money is required to carry out the plans properly. The organising committee will draft a budget to be submitted to the general council. The recommendations have been formulated within a time frame, so that it might be clearer how the four participating countries will be able to carry on by the time of the general chapter in 2023. The organising committee consisting of Sr Elisângela Ferreira Belo, Sr Josephine Corpuz and Sr Mel Ryley, will carry this forward. They will discuss the progress with the general council on a regular basis. In addition, this matter will also be discussed during the ICB meeting.



### *ICC 2020*

On the agenda for 2020 an ICC on mission and spirituality is programmed. Long ago Mgr Zwijsen went looking for three women who wanted to devote themselves to the poor in Tilburg, to show mercy. That initiative has developed into our Congregation. Many changes have occurred since. What remained was that there have always been women who, in the middle of society, knew what they were called to do. What is the situation today? The anthropological vision has changed, as has the mission. How do we look at God now? What does society need and are we able to offer?

That is pretty much the core of the upcoming ICC. It has been agreed upon that this meeting will take place in the Netherlands, as the place of origin.



### *Vincentian pilgrimage*

There was no Vincentian pilgrimage last year but for 2020 a pilgrimage has been planned for the beginning of July. Sisters who were professed in 2019 or will be professed in 2020, will be invited to participate in the Vincentian pilgrimage. The pilgrimage will be entirely organised by our Congregation. The general council intends to organise a pilgrimage in 2021 for medior sisters who have never been in the Netherlands.

### **Sr Dorine Drost resigns from the general council**

During the ICB Sr Dorine requested time to make a personal announcement.



She indicated that her health situation had made her reflect about her activities in the general council. She wanted to take a well-founded decision and had discussed the matter with physicians and the sisters in the general council. Because she had been elected by the chapter members, she wanted to also hear the advice from the ICB members. This finally resulted into the decision that Sr Dorine will resign from the general council as from December 31<sup>st</sup> 2019. The ICB-members understand and respect the decision, but regret that they will have to manage without the presence of Sr Dorine.

Meanwhile Sr Dorine will transfer to an apartment in Tilburg that is now being renovated and to which she will move in the near future.

Her new address will be Kloosterstraat 20 05, 5038 VP Tilburg.

The departure of Sr Dorine required the consultation of the ICB-members

about her successor, as has been stipulated in the Constitutions. A round of consultations resulted in a few suggestions. It was important that the ICB-members expressed their trust in the general council to come to a final decision about her successor.

### **Sr Sofiani Warasi will take over from Sr Dorine**



After many internal discussions about the succession of Sr Dorine, it was decided after about a week to ask Sr Sofiani if she would be willing to join the general council. That was of course a very unexpected request, but Sr Sofiani accepted.

Sr Sofiani Warasi comes from Indonesia. At present she is the principal of a *high school* in Gunung Sitoli and as such involved in the exams of the students. She would like to complete here work first and then travel to the Netherlands as soon as possible to take up her duties in the general council.

### **Closed**

The generalate will be closed from 23 December up to and including 3 January.

### **Joys and sorrows**

During this period no sisters have passed away.

However, four sisters in Indonesia will be celebrating their 12.5 year convent jubilee on 24 December:

Sr Carola Wau

Sr Fernanda Sinaga

Sr Grace Sitanggang

Sr Irmina Wau



*We wish you a merry Christmas  
and a happy 2020*