

SCMM



MISERICORDIAE



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Dear Sisters,

Welcome back to the briefing or what we now call "SCMM Magazine".

The first three months of this year 2024, the atmosphere of the Generalate in Tilburg was a little different than before. We welcome both the arrival of two council members, Sr Miranda Situmorang who arrived on 15 December 2023 and Sr Amy Gitana who arrived on 25 January 2024. The council members are now complete in the Generalate house, meetings are no longer conducted via Zoom as it was done in the previous months.

We realize that as a team in serving the congregation, we do not have enough information related to the tasks of the Generalate of SCMM. We believe that challenging work is easier to accomplish when done as a team and a solid team is like a beautiful musical harmony. Therefore, we agreed to do some activities that help us build a good team in serving the congregation. There are some other activities that aim to get information, establish good relationships and cooperation with some individuals or institutions that allow us to get more information or good support in our further work. Some of these activities can be found in the pages of this magazine.

We are almost at the end of Lenten season and Easter is coming. I quote a few sentences from Pope Francis' message for Lent 2024. He says, "Whenever you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they change their faces to show others that they are fasting" (Mt 6:16). Instead, the Holy Father invites us by saying: "Let others see our joyful faces, smell the fragrance of freedom and feel the love that makes all things new, beginning with the smallest and closest to us."

May this invitation of the Holy Father truly be a motivation for us to endeavor to do so in our communities, ministries and wherever we are, thus making us worthy to celebrate the feast of Easter.

"It is the love of Jesus, which is able to turn hearts soft;

The love of Jesus, that can make people strong, bowing down to give thanks;

The love of Jesus, which lifts us from the valley of darkness and leads to hopeful salvation".

Finally, on behalf of the General Council, we wish you a "Happy Easter". Hallelujah...

Our Greetings and Prayers
Sr Sofiani Warasi





New logo and house style



The general council chooses the logo of the 2023 Chapter as the new logo for our generalate. The logo presents our congregation as a living unit.

We live and work in different countries around the world but have the same origin and source. The countries, such as the Netherlands, Belgium, the United States and England, are becoming smaller and are in the autumn or perhaps the beginning of winter of their existence. Indonesia and Brazil are in the summer and the Philippines and Timor-Leste are still at the beginning. The tree symbolizes the phases the congregation is in.

The hands symbolize working together. Not only with each other, but also with others outside the congregation. The world is changing, and we are changing with it. We are open to new ideas that help us do what society asks of us.

The multicolor emphasizes the different cultures that are united in our congregation. In addition, lay people find their way to our congregation. Men and women who help realize the purpose of the congregation: helping the people who are not heard, who are not seen, who do not seem to exist...

We are on our way together, as equals.



News from Timor Leste

(by Sr Miranda Situmorang)

March 6-22, 2024 was the first working visit of the general council, Sr Sofiani Warasi and Sr Miranda Situmorang, to the country of Timor Leste. There was a warm and pleasant welcome from the sisters in the three communities as well as from the children of the dormitories and orphanage in Ossu. Besides visiting the Sisters they held a meeting with all the communities and a talk to each professed sisters and also to appoint a regional superior. The General Board held a meeting via whatsapp video call to discuss the result of the meeting. Last March 20, 2024 the general council decided that the leadership of the Timor Leste Region is as follows:

Regional Superior: Sr M. Eugenia Pereira, SCMM

Vicars: Sr M. Joanita Freitas, SCMM



They are assisted by a team, namely: Sr Serafina da Costa Pereira, SCMM (currently in Brazil and will return to Timor Leste), Sr M. Natalia Maia de Deus, SCMM, and Sr M. Esmenia Sanches, SCMM. Congratulations and we wish them God's graces and blessings as they take on their new responsibilities.



Visit from our Belgian sisters

On January 30, we received our sisters from Belgium at the generalate. In addition to a delicious lunch and viewing our new office, we mainly talked and sing with each other. It was a beautiful afternoon and a good meeting.





Christmas visit from our Dutch Sisters

On December 18, we celebrated Christmas together and showed our new office to the sisters from the Dutch Sisters. They all came by in small groups. We sang, laughed and, above all, got to meet each other in the Christmas spirit. A warm and cordial start for our new board in the new office. The sisters who could not be present on December 18 still came on January 17.



News from the Dutch Sisters

Currently, the Dutch province has 73 members. Since the beginning of March 2024, all sisters are living in Tilburg on the Oude Dijk or the Kloosterstraat. We realise that we still have many years to go and are therefore enthusiastically busy with our future. For example, we are currently working hard on our spiritual testament. It is fascinating and valuable to think and talk actively together about our completion. There is much that makes us happy and grateful, such as the support of our staff and wonderful celebrations in the chapel.





Ready for the future as a region

(Interview with Sr Marie-Louise Aerts)

On 2 and 3 April 2024, the region days will continue in Belgium. A special transition from province to region. For the past 18 years, Sr Marie-Louise Aerts has served on the provincial board. How will she experience the transition from province to region? She unfortunately cannot answer that now.

What she does already know:

"These are busy days right now; we are really trying to get everything in order" starts Sr Marie-Louise our conversation. "There are many documents that we now need to archive properly, but also those that we need to destroy". Together with the Consultative Body, the regional days were prepared. "Of course, it remains to be seen how the days will eventually go. On 2 April, the General Board will hold individual talks with all sisters. That will be a bit of searching and waiting. Fortunately, we will have the help of an interpreter (Frieda Jans) who also lives in Belgium. She is known to some of our sisters. Our oldest sister is now 102 years old and, although I am the youngest, I will turn 72 on 5 April. We try to prepare everything well, but in the end things may just go differently than planned. Above all, I hope that as a region we can continue to support our works of love."

"Of course, our age plays a role in this. Our love works are more and more 'being there, both for our fellow sisters and for our fellow human beings'. We talk some more about the past 18 years in which Sr Marie-Louise has served on the provincial board. What is the most difficult thing about completion? The care for the increasingly elderly sisters, the closing of the various communities, the relocation of the sisters, the buying and selling of real estate.

"The process of transitioning as an active religious to retired religious in love works; knowing that you have a different place in society, that takes time," indicates Sr Marie-Louise. We are now retired and no longer work in care or education but we are still active volunteers. All in all, Sr Marie-Louise is also looking forward to the regional days. "We have achieved a lot during these past board periods.

During the region days, we ask for prayer and assistance in our decisions and let us hope for more beautiful years of completion of our region.

Convinced that everything always works out, we are positively looking forward to this!!!





Looking to the future with hope

(By Sr Elisangela Ferreira Belo)



Life is beautiful because of the dynamics that drive it to move continuously, implying weaknesses and gifts, stones, thorns, flowers, and fruits, amid fears and afflictions, courage, and the daring to always move forward.

Religious life is contemplated, by the grace of God, with all that is most human and transcendent and for this reason it must be open to building the new and welcoming diversity, being attentive to the signs of the times in search of transformation in view of a better world that becomes concrete through our actions and becomes a visible sign of the merciful love of the God who is Father-Mother and who looks after and cares for his children just as a hen protects her chicks.

Our congregation is going through a time of change! A time of crossing over! We have the beauty of cultural, geographical, and generational contrast, and we suffer the impacts and consequences of the

modern world and the new forms of consecrated religious life. Consecrated religious life is challenged to stop looking back with a nostalgia that doesn't allow it to move forward, because it keeps looking back, committed to a comparison that is sure to lose and perhaps with the illusion of re-establishing a past that no longer exists.

We are beginning a new provincial structure in our congregation, the merger of three small groups of sisters and associates who separately had heavier and more bureaucratic governmental structures and who now share the responsibilities of government, reducing structures and seeking a space for cooperation and co-responsibility. This new structure is full of uncertainties and many more questions than answers, but it brings hope.

We can look to the future with hope, but with full awareness that we are living in times of transformation, we are called to evolve and for this evolution to take place, we will have to consciously renounce what no longer works, we will have to embrace what is different and unknown, but always keeping the flame of love and hope alive, confident that in a new small way we can be witnesses to God's compassionate love for humanity.

The journey is made by walking and that is why we want to be open to new experiences that provide a new structural configuration that facilitates and enriches missionary internationality in our congregation. Experiencing the coming together of three small parts of our congregation in one province is an opportunity to strengthen relationships, give hope and create new expectations for the future of a congregation that is in decline, but which keeps alive the desire to be a bearer of hope and prophetic voices.

From July 1 to 5, an important step will be taken for the new province: a provincial chapter will be held in Brazil, with the presence and participation of sisters and associates from the United States, the Philippines and Brazil.



Inspiration and start as general council

On January 29, we were all physically present in Tilburg for the first time. A good time to get to know each other better and discover together what tasks we all have to do. We started an extensive introductory program that lasted the entire month of February. The aim was to arrive at a division of tasks within the general council and to reflect on all recommendations of the chapter. A detailed report of everything we have learned will of course follow in the annual report. Here is a small impression of what we have done:



- *Meeting with the Nuncio Paul Tschan In-Nam in The Hague*
- *Meeting with Bishop Gerard de Korte in Den Bosch*
- *Introduction and lunch with the KNR staff*
- *Presentation about the Heritage Center by Guus van Gulp*
- *Dialogue about the Tilburg City Museum and vision development of museums with Petra Robben*
- *Meeting about children and poverty with Marja Wittenbols*
- *We, as a team with Anne Stael*
- *Forms of connection with Bro. Brother Huitema*
- *Communication with Dr. Mirjam Vossen*



Division of tasks within the general council

The general council has decided at the following division of tasks.

Board member	Contact for	Responsible for the chapter's recommendations
Sr. Sofiani	The Netherlands	Finances and leadership
Sr. Elisângela	International province	Structure and connectedness
Sr. Amy	Belgium and England/ Ireland	Communication and heritage
Sr. Miranda	Indonesia and Timor-Leste	Charisma, spirituality, mission and formation



Moving to the Netherlands

(By Sr. Amy Gitana)

Moving to the Netherlands is a leap of faith and letting go of my comfort zone. It was a big challenge and a lot of courage to step forward and begin to adapt to a new culture, new language, and new environment. I am grateful for the trust and confidence of the congregation chapter participants that I was chosen and allowing me to serve as one of the council members of the congregation. Here I am now in Tilburg, Netherlands where the new seat of the Generalate House is located. This is the country our congregation started 191 years ago and now it is in the process of completion.

An extensive start up program was scheduled to help us to begin with our role as members of the general council. It was an opportunity to learn and discover myself on one of the topics which is the Enneagram. It gave me a better understanding of my personality and behavior that helped me in building relationships and immersing myself in the company of the other members of the general council and the staff of the generalate. It was a great learning experience. I feel relaxed and at home with everyone that I have started to get to know more. The main topics on Enneagram and Leadership dealt with by Anne Stael were for me tools to help us work together as a good team.

At the end of the program the division of task and concrete planning of recommendations, which was based on the last general chapter were discussed and decided. As I explore my new tasks, I tell myself, a multitude of tasks and responsibilities, what can I do? I needed to develop time management and create a daily to-do list that I can begin with. It will not be easy but with faith, commitment, and action I dare to do it with the support of others. I do believe that I can collaborate and share the gifts and talents I have with the general council team.

My task is to oversee communication, to look and search possibilities to be able to update our means of communicating at all levels of the congregation.

It has a vital role between the general council and members of the congregation and lay associates. How can we develop a better means of communication? If you wish to join me in organizing/updating our communication, send your suggestions/opinions to my email address.



I entrust myself to the Lord, together with my companions in the general council team as we embark on the new challenges of shaping, restructuring, and daring to work together in faithfulness to our charism and mission whose core values are trust in Divine Providence, mercy and simplicity as exemplified by our founder Msgr. Joannes Zwijssen.



Synodal process 2021-2024

(Published on www.synod.va)



For a synodal Church

In October 2021, the process for the Synod of Bishops 2021 -2024 'For a synodal Church: communio, participatio, missio ' started. The Synod of Bishops itself will be held in Rome in two parts: in October 2023 and October 2024. The first session of the

Synod of Bishops on Synodality took place in Rome from 4 to 29 October 2023. The 41-page summary report of the synod is entitled " A Synodal Church on mission". In this period until October 2024, the entire people of God are again invited to reflect on the points raised by the synod participants. The second synod meeting in October 2024 will formulate proposals for the pope. Ultimately, he is the one who decides how and which of these proposals will be implemented.

Everyone can actively participate in the synodal journey with his/her prayer. The synodal process is primarily a spiritual process. To help people pray and share their prayers, the website www.prayforthesynod.va has been set up. On this website you can also find the Synthesis Report of October 28, 2023, in various languages.



"Everyone must fight human trafficking, never be complicit"

(Published on www.vaticannews.va)

Pope Francis made this fervent call to combat and eradicate human trafficking on the 10th World Day of Prayer against Trafficking in Persons on February 8. He reiterated: "It is never too late to take action."

In 2015, Pope Francis initiated this annual celebration when he invited the International Union of Women Religious of Major Superiors (UISG) and the Union of Male Religious of Major Superiors (USG) to celebrate this day on February 8, the liturgical anniversary of the Saint Josephine Bakhita.

Bakhita was canonized in 2000 and is the patron saint of Sudan and survivors of human trafficking. The Sudanese-born Italian Cannosian nun (1869-1947) was sold into slavery as a child and was a victim of human traffickers until she ended up in Italy, where she later became a religious Cannosian sister. In his message, the Pope urged everyone to follow in the footsteps of Saint Bakhita.

"Let us not forget the injustice she endured, her suffering, but at the same time her strength and her journey of liberation and rebirth to a new life," he recalled. "Saint Bakhita encourages us to open our eyes and ears to see those who remain unseen and to hear those who have no voice, to recognize the dignity of every human being and to fight human trafficking and all forms of exploitation. "

The United Nations has its own World Day against Trafficking in Persons on July 30.





Pope Francis' message for lent 2024

(Published on press.vatican.va)



The synodal form of the Church, which in these years we are rediscovering and developing, suggests that Lent is also a time of communitarian decision-making, decisions, both small and large, that go in opposite directions.

Decisions that can change the daily lives of individuals and entire neighborhood, such as the way we acquire goods, care for creation, and seek to include those who are invisible or undervalued.

I invite every Christian community to do just this: to give its members time to rethink their lifestyles, time to assess their place in society and the contribution they make to its progress.

In his Message, Pope Francis recalled that Lent "is a time of conversion, a time of freedom" because "God does not want subjects, but sons and daughters" and, citing the Book of Exodus, he emphasised that the Word of God is addressed to humanity, each one of us personally today: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery".

In this regard, the Holy Father emphasized that "it is time to act, and in Lent to act also means to pause in prayer, to receive the word of God, to pause like the Samaritan before a wounded brother or sister" because "love of God and love of neighbor are one love".

The invitation consists of "to pause in the presence of God beside the carnality of our neighbor. Therefore, prayer, almsgiving and fasting are not three unrelated acts, but rather one movement of openness and self-emptying, and he added that "to the extent that this Lent becomes a time of conversion, anxious humanity will see an explosion of creativity, a new ray of hope".

Referring to the journey of synods in the Church, Pope Francis suggested that Lent is also "a time of communitarian decision-making, decision-making, small and large, that goes in opposite directions," that changes people's daily lives, such as, "the way we acquire things, care for creation, and endeavor to include those who are invisible or unseen." Pope Francis suggested that Lent is also a time of "communitarian decision-making, decision-making, small and large, that goes in the opposite direction," that changes people's daily lives, such as, "the way we acquire things."

"I invite every Christian community to do this: to give its members time to rethink their lifestyle" in order to evaluate and improve their contribution to society, the Pope wrote.

Finally, the Holy Father launched an invitation to live the "courage of conversion" with an appeal he addressed to young people during the WYD in Lisbon: "Keep searching and be prepared to take risks. At this moment, we face enormous risks; we hear the painful pleas of so many people. It is true, we are experiencing a third world war that is happening little by little. But let us find the courage to see our world, not as a world on the brink of death, but as being in the process of giving birth, not at the end but at the beginning of a great new chapter of history. We need the courage to think this way."

"Such is the courage to convert, born of slavery. For the sake of faith and charity, take hope, this little child, by the hand", he concluded. (Pope calls on the faithful to be ready to take risks, and find the courage to see the world)