

May Your Kingdom Come!

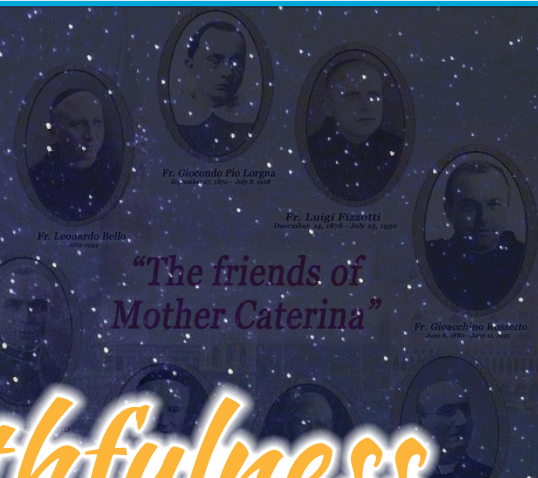
MISSIONARY SERVANTS OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT - ASIA



MISSION NEWS 2023

100

Years of God's Faithfulness



"The friends of
Mother Caterina"

"The First MSBS Sisters"



ANCELLE MISSIONARIE DEL SANTISSIMO SACRAMENTO



In his letter to Timothy, St. Paul wrote: "If we have died with him, we shall also live with him; if we persevere, we shall also reign with him. But if we deny him, he will deny us. If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself." More than an assurance of the reward that awaits those who persevere in living for God, St. Paul's words are a testament to God's fidelity.

St. Paul, a devout Jew, knew how God's fidelity has been manifested all throughout Israel's history. He fulfilled His promise to Abraham. He listened to the cry of His oppressed people in Egypt, led them out of slavery, through the desert and to the Promised Land. The ancient prophets bore witness to the God who does not abandon His people despite their wickedness and infidelity. Jesus, his very person, his life, and death, is an exemplary witness and embodiment of God's fidelity. In Him, God tells us that nothing can separate us from His love – neither anguish, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor the sword, nor death, nor life, nor any other creature – as St. Paul also wrote.

As God's fidelity is woven through the story of Israel, so it is in our history as a Congregation. His fidelity is manifested in the journey of Mother Caterina Zecchini, our foundress,

her first companions, and all MSBS sisters who embraced the charism and passed it on to the next generations. They've met countless struggles, fumbled at times, but continued to rise again. They have nurtured the charism God has given them with tears and countless sacrifices. They started with nothing but the tenacity to see God's mission flourish, the conviction that they are called to play a part in it and the humility to accept that they cannot accomplish the mission without God and the assistance of people whom He used as instruments for the fulfillment of His plan. Their generous cooperation to God's plan and His unfailing grace and accompaniment are the reasons why we continue to exist in the Church today. And so, in gratitude, we highlight in this year's issue the faithfulness of God through our 100 years of existence as an Institute. Retelling the stories of some people who have been a significant part of our history and sharing the different ways we have celebrated this important milestone, the richness they have brought us and some reflections on our mission experiences are our tribute to His goodness and fidelity. May these stories turn our gaze to the beauty of being part of God's mission and bring us to praise and glorify Him.

To God, be the highest glory!

CATECHISM ON THE EUCHARIST

The Eucharist is a great proof of God's faithfulness. It is a deep mystery, unlocking a world of blessings and graces. It's a powerful mystery that gives us MSBS a sense of purpose and drives us to carry out our mission in the Church. This year, we're all about spreading the word on the Eucharist - what it means, why it's important, how it can enrich our Christian journey, and more. Get ready to dive into the divine gift of the Eucharist and discover its wonders!



UNVEILING THE MEANING OF THE EUCHARIST

"Eucharist" means thanksgiving. It comes from the Greek words "eucharistein" and "eulogein," which recall Jewish blessings, proclaiming God's incredible works of creation, redemption, and sanctification (CCC 1398).

It is a sacred act of showing gratitude to God.

EUCARIST: CHRIST'S HOLY PRESENCE IN OUR MIDST

Outside the Mass, Jesus in the Eucharist remains in the Holy Tabernacle, the place in the church where Consecrated Hosts are kept. The term tabernacle comes from the Latin word "*tabernaculum*" meaning 'abode', the house of God by men. This explains the importance given to it by Christians over the centuries.



WHY JOIN THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION?



TO COMMEMORATE THE LAST SUPPER

- The “Last Supper” refers to the final evening meal Jesus had with his disciples before he was arrested. It was no ordinary meal but a Passover meal, a festive remembrance of the freedom of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.
- During the Last Supper, “Jesus took a piece of bread, gave thanks to God, broke it, and gave it to them, saying “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in memory of me.” In the same way, he gave them the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is God’s new covenant sealed with my blood, which is poured out for you” (Lk. 22:19-20).
- The priest-celebrant repeats the same gesture and words in the Eucharistic Celebration



TO PRAISE AND THANK GOD, THE FATHER

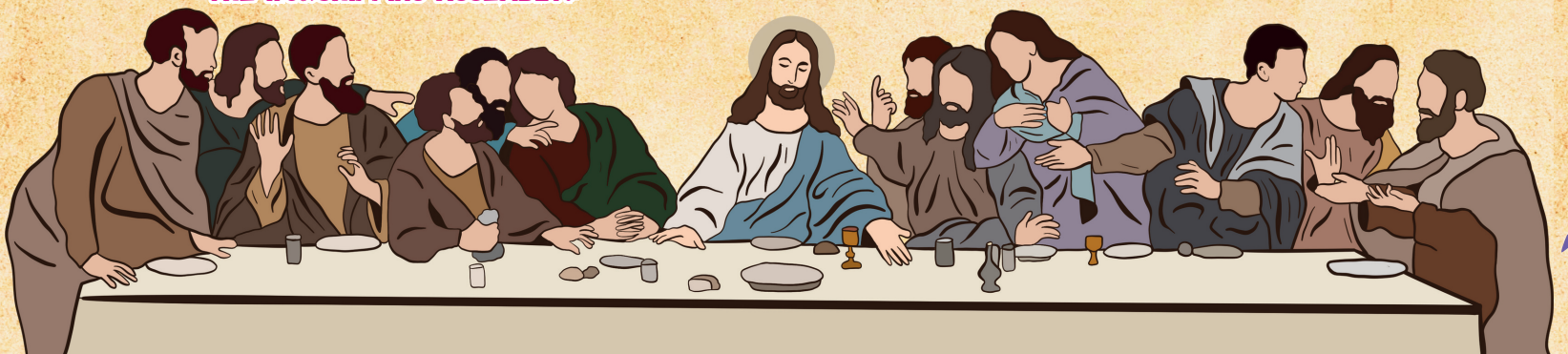
The Eucharist is a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Father, a blessing by which the Church expresses her gratitude to God. The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of praise by which the Church sings the glory of God in the name of all creation. (CCC 1360-1361)



TO BE IN COMMUNION WITH OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

The Eucharist brings people together in a beautiful bond of communion. When we share in the Eucharistic meal, the community unites as one body in Christ. St. Paul’s words in Corinthians capture it perfectly: “When we break bread, we share in Christ’s body. Since there’s only one loaf, we all become one body, despite our many differences.” (1 Cor 10: 16b-17)

AS PEOPLE GATHER AROUND THE TABLE, THEY’RE CALLED TO CARRY ON JESUS’ LEGACY – SPREADING LOVE, JUSTICE, AND MERCY. AND DON’T FORGET, CHRIST IS RIGHT THERE IN THE MIDST OF THE WORSHIPPING ASSEMBLY.



WHY JOIN THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION?



TO RECEIVE THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

The Church teaches that Jesus himself is present in the Consecrated Bread and Wine. That's right! The Consecrated Bread and Wine are not just symbolic, but the real deal, the embodiment of Christ's body and blood. Don't let the appearance fool you, as a Catholic, you know that the Bread and Wine is transformed into Christ's Body and Blood!

TO SHARE IN THE SELF-SACRIFICE OF JESUS

Through the Eucharist, Jesus' sacrifice is symbolically commemorated without bloodshed.

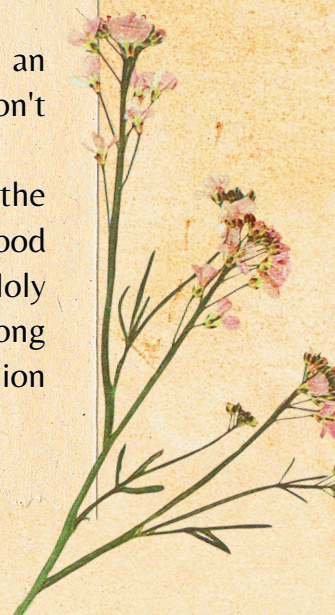
As we take part in this sacred ritual, we consume the Body and Blood of Christ and partake in his sacrifice. It is crucial to unite our selves with Jesus and emulate his submission to the will of the Father.



HERE ARE SOME REMINDERS FOR OUR FELLOW CATHOLICS!



- Before taking Holy Communion, fasting for an hour is a must - do not eat solid food. But, don't worry, sipping water or taking meds is okay.
- And, while it's important to receive the Eucharist during the Easter Season, it's a good idea to do it more often. And since Holy Communion forms a special bond among Catholics, only those who are in full communion with the Church can receive it.



THE SWEET REWARDS OF HOLY COMMUNION

It brings us closer to God.

The Lord said: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me."

~ CCC
1391



It unites us with the Church.

As we partake in the Eucharist, Christ binds us all into one body - the Church. This sacred communion renews, fortifies, and intensifies our bond with the Church.

(CCC 1396)

It commits us to the poor.

To truly partake in the gift of Christ's sacrifice, we must acknowledge His presence in our poor brethren. God has already redeemed us from our sins and welcomed us to this feast, so we must not forget to extend mercy to others.

~ CCC 1397

It separates us from sin.

Not only does the Eucharist unite us with Christ, but it also washes away past sins and protect us from future ones.

(CCC 1393)

It nourishes us spiritually.

Just like food nourishes our physical bodies, Holy Communion feeds our souls! It boosts, protects, and refreshes the grace we received during our Baptism, and helps us grow as Christians.

(CCC 1392)

ACT OF THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION

From the depths of my heart I thank You, dear Lord, for Your infinite kindness in coming to me. How good You are to me! With Your most holy Mother and all the angels, I praise Your mercy and generosity toward me, a poor sinner. I thank You for nourishing my soul with Your Sacred Body and Precious Blood. I will try to show my gratitude to You in the Sacrament of Your love, by obedience to Your holy commandments, by fidelity to my duties, by kindness to my neighbor and by an earnest endeavor to become like You in my daily conduct. Amen.





TIPS FOR A MORE MEANINGFUL AND FRUITFUL PARTICIPATION IN THE MASS



Let the Sign of the Cross embrace your entire existence - your body, mind, soul, will, thoughts, and emotions.

Reflect on the truth of God's presence within you through the grace of your baptism when the priest says, "May the Lord be with you."

During the Penitential Act, close your eyes and picture standing at the foot of the Cross, look up into Jesus's eyes, and ask His forgiveness for your sins.

In the Kyrie (Lord, have mercy), place in God's loving hands your sufferings and trust in His ability to help you.

While you absorb the sacred text, open your mind to the Holy Spirit and listen for their divine guidance. Their words may contain a pearl of wisdom, a new perspective, or even a comforting remedy for your soul.

Ask God to guide your thoughts, choices, and words by making the sign of the Cross on your forehead, lips, and over your heart, and living the Gospel message more deeply.

During prayers of the faithful, cultivate a desire to pray for others and respond with your heart and mind by praying for the needs of the Church and the world.

Through the preparation of the gifts at the altar, offer yourself to God, place your life in his hands.

When the priest say, lift up your hearts, set all other worry aside and focus your will, emotions and hearts on what is happening at Mass.

As you sing the Sanctus, join the thousands of angels, the Virgin Mary and all the Saints in their joyful song of praise.

During the Eucharist, observe the priest as they transform the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, and reflect on Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.

As you pray the Our Father, recognize the gift of being able to talk with God in this way, which Christ has made possible for us.

In the Rite of Peace, feel Christ's peace and share that peace with others.

Recognize your unworthiness as you say "Lord, I am not worthy..." but remember that Jesus calls you and has the power to heal you.

Focus your attention on Jesus and ask Him to prepare your heart to receive Him. Experience His presence within as a living tabernacle after Holy Communion.

After the dismissal, carry the Good News of Jesus to the world through your actions and words.



FROM COMMUNION TO A HOLY MISSION



The Concluding Rites with the Dismissal prepare us for mission: empowered by the Holy Spirit, we live out our baptismal consecration in the world. Renewed by the Eucharist, we are sent back into our daily lives to transform our communities and world.

From the Mass, we return to our daily lives with a resolution to live as true disciples of Christ, who obey His commandments, offer our sacrifices to Him, striving to follow His will even when they are contrary to our own preferences and desires.



The Good News we have received during Mass should overflow into our lives and move us to mission in the world. Thus, the Concluding Rites are not an end but a beginning, calling us to make our entire lives “Eucharistic,” so that “the Christian who takes part in the Eucharist learns to become a promoter of communion, peace and solidarity in every situation” (St. John Paul II, *Mane Nobiscum*)

THE EUCHARIST PREPARES US FOR MISSION...

As we meet Christ, who gives Himself to us, in the Eucharist, so we too are called to give ourselves at the service of our communities in the world. As students, as members of our families, as professionals, we are called to be, wherever we are, builders of communion in the family and in the society.



The Eucharist propels us forth to transform the world into a better place, a place where God reigns. The Eucharist “increases, rather than lessens, our sense of responsibility for the world today.” Christ in the Eucharist calls us to build “a more human world, a world fully in harmony with God’s plan” (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no. 20).

FEATURES...

Witness of God's Plan

Sr. Maria Thuan, MSBS

"I do not know who he is. He must certainly be a beautiful soul, not ordinary, and he gave me such an impression which if the time had not been late, I would have told him everything I had in my soul."

~ Mo. Caterina

As an aspirant, I've read these words of our foundress, Mother Caterina. Who is he who made such an impact on her? When I learned more about the history of our Congregation, I was introduced to that person, who was none other than Fr. Luigi Fizzotti.

Fr. Luigi was a Passionist Priest from Novara, Italy. At the age of 17, he was admitted to the Novitiate of the Passionists in Molare, Alessandria. In 1896, he had his first religious profession and was ordained priest on June 29, 1901. He served as the community's superior from 1910 to 1915 and served as a military chaplain during the First World War in Maggiore Hospital in Novara. Afterwards, he was selected as Secretary for the Foreign Missions from 1925 to 1928. In 1926, he was appointed as the Consultant of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, and he held that position until his death in Rome on July 25, 1950.

Whenever I read his letters to Mo. Caterina, I am filled with affection, profound gratitude, and respectful admiration. It is clear to me that he was a great man who have experienced God's grace and had a constant dialogue with Him. His sincerity, faithfulness, and openness have inspired me. In his lifetime, he earnestly sought God's will, helping Mo. Caterina with a sense of responsibility and a fatherly heart. He encouraged Mo. Caterina with firm words full of hope: "These doubts are no longer allowed to you. God wishes the Institute to exist; He wants you to establish it, and if you do not want to do the will of God, I will one day be your greatest accuser." He supported Mother Caterina with great will and love for the Opera. He wrote to Mother Caterina: "The Opera is always close to my heart, and God knows what I am willing to do to see it thrive." He not only showed her the value of fully belonging to Jesus Christ, the purpose and mission of the Congregation in the future but also guided and sustained her in her role as Foundress. He advised her to give the title of the Congregation which is "Servants of the Mission" or "Missionary Servants." Besides that, he helped Mother Caterina write down the Constitutions. Through letters and recommendations, he assured her of his ardent support. With Fr. Luigi, Mo. Caterina experienced God's providential love. He was silently present with the first Ancelle, especially in the most difficult and challenging moments of the first days of forming the religious Congregation. He encouraged and comforted them: "I will therefore be a father and the Cyrenian to you; I will bear all your faults, miseries, and temptation." He reminded them: "Your poor heart must continually beat for Christ."

I believe that even in heaven, he continues to pray for our Congregation and for each one of us as he used to pray for the first Ancelle: "May the Most Sweet Jesus grant you and everyone the strength of spirit to continue the work you have begun." I am personally thankful for Fr. Luigi's contribution to the birth of our Congregation. I am sure that if he were here today, he would tell us to nurture the sense of gratitude in our hearts, the gratitude that does not stop at remembrance and sentiments but one that becomes a driving force to faithfully do God's will. His words constantly echo in my heart: "Jesus must be your life...you must always burn with love for him."



FEATURES...

Betting on an Uncertain Future

Sr. Ermelinda Bhiju, MSBS

Have you gambled on something you're not sure would bring positive results? Have you taken a journey without knowing whether the destination is worth the effort? In the early twentieth century, a young woman named Maria Papinutto wagered her life on an uncertain future.

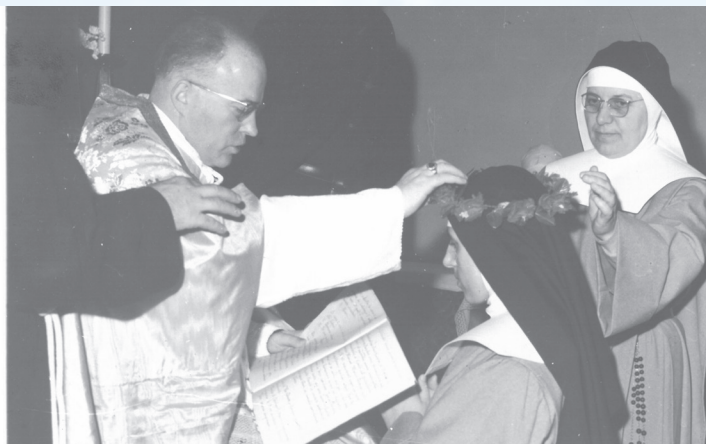
Maria Papinutto was a young factory worker in Novara, Italy. As the factory was far from her home, she stayed at a dormitory of the Ursuline Sisters. There, she met our Mother Foundress, Caterina Zecchini, who visited the convent several times to facilitate missionary conferences and invite ladies to join the Institute she was planning to establish. Attracted by her missionary ideals, Maria Papinutto kept in communication with her through letters. Their exchange of correspondence cultivated her desire to participate in God's plan to establish a new Institute dedicated to supporting the mission.

When the right time came, the twenty-year-old Maria left her family, her work, and everything familiar for a future that held no certainty. It was May 30, 1923. She went to Venice to join Caterina Zecchini as one of the members of the first Community of the Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament. That journey from one familiar place to another city was just the beginning of a meaningful adventure to the unknown and uncertain. Her life after that had been marked by abandoning herself to God and facing head-on the uncertainties of life and mission.

Maria Papinutto, who later took on the name Luigina,



did not waste time worrying about the future. Instead, she spent all her energies patiently and selflessly laying a solid foundation for God's work along with the Foundress and the first MSBS. As pioneering members, life had not been easy for them – they lacked the financial resources to support themselves and their mission works. They had faced misunderstandings, other challenges, and difficulties in the apostolate and community life. In the first ten years, they did not know whether the institute would grow or would be approved by the Church authorities. Still, she and the other sisters who joined the first community bet their lives on the dream, strengthened not by the promise of a certain and bright future but by the certainty of God's faithfulness, who called them to share in His missionary work.



FEATURES...



Mo. Luigina, the first “daughter” of the Foundress, gave her all to the Congregation. When she was called by the Church authorities to lead the Congregation, she readily accepted it. She was twice elected as the Superior General, generously and wisely leading the Congregation for twenty years. In this

role, she had shown the same courage, steering the institute to new paths and guiding the sisters toward a life of fidelity to God and His mission. She loved them without distinction, preferring the neediest in body and spirit. She was kind, humble, grateful, and forgiving in words and deeds. To her last breath, she worked and cooperated to fulfill God’s will. Indeed, she betted everything she had – her whole life so God’s work may flourish. For me, she is worthy of emulation. She was an authentic Missionary Servant who exemplified the virtues of faith, hope, and love. As MSBS, she reminds me again and again of what I must do to be faithful to my calling: “To be a true Missionary Servant, one must be holy, searching and doing the will of God in simplicity and concealment, imitating Mary, in the spirit of St. Therese of the Child Jesus.” Thank you, Mother Luigina. We are reaping the fruits of your sacrifices, labor, and courageous spirit. Your example serves as a source of inspiration and motivation for us all. Thank you for bringing light to the path we now walk on and continually encouraging us to live the missionary spirit, the spirit of sacrifice, generosity, and availability for the mission. Watch over us and pray for us from Heaven!



FEATURES...

Passionate for the Eucharist and Mission

Sr. Veronica, MSBS

When you pass by a church, there is a tiny flickering light that usually draws a passerby's attention. That light signifies God's real presence in the Church. When a person kneels in front of the Eucharist, the real presence of Christ, and opens himself to a real encounter with Him, peace and joy glow in his face, just as Moses' face had when he talked with God. When a person radiates from a real encounter with Him, others catch the light and are drawn to it. This happened when our Foundress, Mo. Caterina, encountered Fr. Giocondo Pio Lorgna, a dominican priest who had passionately preached and conveyed his love for the Eucharist.

Fr. Giocondo Pio Lorgna was born to Giovanni Lorgna and Maria Fiasella on September 27, 1870, in Porpetto di Tresana, Massa Carrara, Italy. He entered the order of preachers at the age of 19 and became priest at the age of 23. On January 4, 1905, he was appointed parish priest of Sts. John and Paul. Mother Caterina, who belonged to that parish, met him on February 2, 1905. His sermon about the Eucharist found a good and fertile soil in the generous soul of Caterina, opening the way for her spiritual growth. His accompaniment and inspiration helped nurture in Mother Caterina a deep love for the Eucharist, leading her to actively seek to cooperate

in the mission of the Church.

Fr. Lorgna's great love for the Eucharist and contemplative life enabled him to do the intense pastoral ministries in the parish. With his words and actions, he taught those entrusted to his care to love and serve God. He revitalized the Christian movements that were already established in different parts of Venice

for the benefit of mission. He introduced and initiated many mission activities in his parish and invited his parishioners to take part in the mission of the Church. Fr. Lorgna had the gift of discerning Charism in the people he met or encountered and was able to help them realize it, to make it grow and to put them into service.

For Mo. Caterina in whom the love for God and the will to participate in the mission of the Church had already been planted, her encounter with this passionate priest had been providential. Fr. Lorgna became her first spiritual director and guide for 23 years. Despite some misunderstanding, he had shown his support and did his best to accompany the Foundress until his death.

I thank Fr. Lorgna for imparting and strengthening the love for the Eucharist in Mo. Caterina. This precious gift he handed on to his parishioners continues to spread and attract many people including me. Jesus in the Eucharist drew me to himself and today I am one of the Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament. Knowing the life of Fr. Lorgna, reminds me once more that Eucharist and prayer are the strongest support I need in my life as a missionary. My union with the Eucharistic Jesus who offered himself to be broken and shared for mankind is the source of my strength. Finally, together with all the Ancelle, I thank God for the gift of this pious soul in the Church and for his services and sacrifices.



100th Anniversary Celebration...

All for the Mission

Sr. Vu Thi Hang, MSBS

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of our Congregation, our community in Quezon city organized activities that seek to promote missionary awareness and cooperation among the people of God.

As MSBS, we believe that the primary means of supporting the mission is through prayers, and so we scheduled three moments of prayer: praying the mission rosary in February, the Way of the Cross in March, and the Eucharistic missionary adoration in April. These prayer moments were livestreamed via our FB page and zoom. Our sisters in other communities, our mission cooperators and friends participated virtually.

In the first moment of prayer, we prayed for the needs and situations in different continents. In praying the Way of the Cross, we listened to the reflections of different missionaries and priests on the stations of the Cross. The last prayer moment which is very close to the heart of each Ancella is the Eucharistic adoration for the mission. It is an answer to our Foundress' invitation: "Let us participate through prayer and sacrifice in the apostolate of the missionaries." Pope Francis also affirmed the importance of Eucharistic adoration in evangelization: "Without Eucharistic Adoration, there is no evangelization." The Eucharist unites us and strengthens us to love and carry out missions.

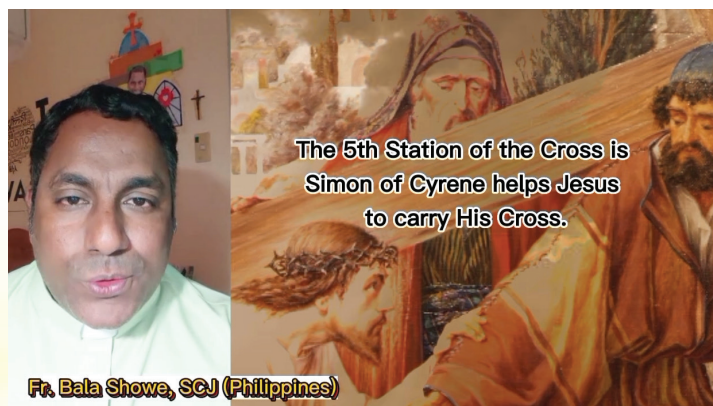
These moments prepared us spiritually for the actual celebration of our 100th Foundation Anniversary on May 31, 2023 and at the same time, **they were moments**



of thanksgiving for all those who cooperated in the foundation and growth of our Congregation.

The celebration culminated in the Eucharistic celebration presided by the Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, Most Reverend Charles John Brown on May 27, 2023 in our community. This coincided with the feast day of Mary, Queen of the Apostles. The Nuncio invited us to continue in the footsteps of our Foundress and pattern our life after Mary, Queen of the Apostles. In addition, we also worked on the compilation of the history, challenges, blessings and dreams that have shaped the MSBS identity and mission in one hundred keywords. It was for us a way of deepening our knowledge and appreciation for the Institute. Indeed, it helped us appreciate the legacy of our Foundress, the gift of the Spirit and the generosity and sacrifices of all Ancelle.

As I reminisce all our activities for the hundred years anniversary of our existence, I cannot but thank God for His goodness, mercy and faithfulness. The Sisters of the Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament have always experienced the providential and loving hand of the eternal God who accompanied and guided our Institute and bestowed upon us all countless blessings, the God who continues to mold and empower the Ancelle to remain steadfast in living their consecration, moving forward in faith and love and serving the Church under the two pillars of Eucharist and mission.



100th Anniversary Celebration...

Recalling the history of our Congregation, the words of Psalm 89 resound in my heart: “I will sing of your mercy forever, LORD, proclaim your faithfulness through all

ages.”

May God continually increase our holy passion for missionary apostolate!

A Small Flock for the Mission

Sr. Benedetta Day Day, MSBS

Envisioning the Congregation she was planning to establish, Mo. Caterina said, “I was thinking about a small flock, a chosen group of souls, whose purpose is solely to devote themselves completely to the Lord for the spread of the faith among those who do not believe.” (Letter to Luigina di Godego, 31 January 1921)

Bearing the same thought of our foundress, our two-year-old community journeys together as a small flock and devoting ourselves wholeheartedly for God’s Kingdom. On this special year, we expressed our gratitude and joy through moments of intimacy with the Lord in the Eucharist. We had three special moments of Eucharistic adoration, praying with the

themes Mission, Servanthood and Eucharist. In our first adoration, we deepened our understanding and appreciation of our missionary spirituality in light of the writings of our Foundress and the documents of our Congregation. On the second moment, we meditated on the virtue of servanthood, which is exemplified in Mary, who offered her life for the salvific plan of God. On the third moment, we contemplated the Eucharist, its transforming power, and the missionary impulse it generates.

Aside from the moments of prayers, we took on special daily commitment for 100 days. Those commitments allowed us to reflect on the spiritual treasures of our Congregation, enrich our living out of the eucharistic-missionary charism and offer prayers and sacrifices for the sanctification of the Congregation and for the universal mission of the Church.

Through all these, the celebration of 100th anniversary became for us an occasion to rejoice for the blessings we received as an Institute for the past 100 years and also renewed our commitment to the mission of drawing souls to Christ, of making him known and loved by all.



100th Anniversary Celebration...

MSBS Centennial Celebration in Looc

Sr. Grace Pagwagan, MSBS

On October 28, 2023, the Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament celebrated their centennial at the Saint Raphael Archangel Parish Looc Occidental Mindoro. The celebration was simple yet meaningful, as it was an opportunity for us MSBS Sisters to express our gratitude to God for his guidance over the past 100 years. We invited the parish community to celebrate with us and thank God for the gift of Mother Caterina Zecchini, our foundress, our first ten sisters, Mother Caterina's friends who guided and supported her, and all the people who helped us in our mission.

In planning this celebration, I felt joy seeing how our small community tried to put together our gifts to share our Eucharistic Missionary Charism, our first sisters' stories, and our Congregation's history with the parish community. God guided and provided everything we needed through the people around us. The members of the Parish Youth Ministry, the Holy Childhood Association, the Lay Minister, and the Lectors and Commentators contributed their talents in enlivening the celebration through songs and dances and giving time to prepare their presentations and the venue. Some women helped prepare food, and San Raphael Archangel Parish, headed by our Parish Priest, provided financial assistance. As a missionary on this island, the

gratitude and support of the Christian community for MSBS sisters who have been serving there since 2019 through pastoral and faith formation of the Holy Childhood Association, Youth, Catechists, and preschool pupils have brought me joy and consolation. During the Holy Mass, I was moved to see the positive impact of prayer, hard work, and dedication of our two sisters, Sr. Rosanna Favero and Sr. Rosa Viscovich. They started the mission in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, in

the Philippines in 1993. During the mass, Fr. Philip Fantone, the main celebrant, shared how he was inspired by the life of St. Therese and St. Francis Xavier through the sisters' catechesis. He also mentioned that he and his family were blessed by the sisters' prayer after the Mass, saying: "We are praying that someday you will become a priest." This blessing came true, and now he is motivated to pay it forward by helping those who need financial assistance for their studies.

"The story of the foundress, Mo. Caterina, her love for the Blessed Sacrament serves as an inspiring example. Through the MSBS sisters' encounter and relationship with God, they share the message of Jesus with others. Over the last century, the Congregation's mission has yielded countless fruits. They are modern-day missionaries, and their example is a challenge to all who have benefited from the mission of the MSBS. It is time to share the love of Jesus with others if you have encountered and know Him. Our lives will be meaningful when we give life to others," Fr. Philip continued.

As we celebrate the past, we also look to the future, where the challenge of building a Church that welcomes all remains, the challenge of building a Church that is truly **missionary**.



100th Anniversary Celebration...

MSBS Centennial Celebration with MCS

Sr. Francis May Cajayon, MSBS

We recently marked the 100th anniversary of the Congregation of the Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament from May 17th to 19th at Mother Caterina School in San Jose. The event brought together students, families, friends, and visitors to make the school grounds a hub of activity. The three-day celebration, held at MCS, featured a picturesque scenery reminiscent of Burano, Italy, and was open to all. We recently marked the 100th anniversary of the Congregation of the Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament. The celebration occurred from May 17th to May 19th at Mother Caterina School in San Jose. Our school and our students, their families, friends, and guests gathered to celebrate this special occasion. For three days, the school grounds were transformed into a beautiful setting reminiscent of Burano, a picturesque town in Italy. The event was open to all, and we welcomed everyone to join us in the festivities.

Everyone was busy on the days leading up to the grand celebration of the MSBS foundation anniversary in Mother Caterina School. Yet, there was an atmosphere of joy and peace. The summer heat and unexpected rains did nothing to dampen the spirit and enthusiasm of those putting up colorful booths. The generous parents of our pupils helped out, spending their precious time and effort in making this celebration fun and meaningful.



The celebration started with a Thanksgiving Mass. It was followed by the opening of the booths named after Mother Caterina and the first sisters, a tribute and token of gratitude for their works and sacrifices. The booths were blessed after the Holy Mass. Different fun activities marked the three-day celebration. Everyone was glad and excited to go and explore the different foods and items in the colorful booths. They played, performed, and had fun together. They rejoiced together in the gifts and talents shown by some pupils, teachers, parents, and sisters through their prepared intermission number. The last day was the highlight of the celebration. To express joy and gratitude for the fruits of the one hundred years presence of the Congregation,

100th Anniversary Celebration...

for its mission of making Jesus known to all, and for sharing the charism, pupils of every level performed the cultural dance of the countries where the communities of the Missionary Servants of the Blessed Sacrament are present. Pupils from the nursery level performed the doxology “Most Sweet Jesus” while the other pupils danced Vietnamese, Philippines, Indonesian, Myanmar, Colombian, Dominican Republic, and Italian dances. Their colorful costumes representing the countries contributed to that afternoon's unique atmosphere. I can see in the eyes of their parents the joy and contentment of seeing their children perform international dance. All the parents were excited to see their children and were trying to capture that moment. The joy and beautiful experience remained in everyone's heart.

I am grateful for being part of this celebration. It was indeed one of the experiences that filled my heart with joy and contentment. This celebration would not have been successful without the cooperation and generosity of each one, also by the different communities who may be far but have shown us their love and support. More so, it will not be a success without the Holy Spirit, who inspires us to use the talents and resources given to us.

I believe that our Foundress, Mother Caterina Zecchini, and our first ten sisters had been looking at us with joy as they saw how the work they had begun continues to flourish and reach many lands and many hearts.



100th Anniversary Celebration...

"He Will Still Remain Faithful."

Sr. Emi Soe, MSBS



"We are poor, we are weak, but in our poverty and weakness we can do one thing: 'to suffer.' Jesus gave us an example and we, as generous people, must follow his footsteps if we want to be his disciples."

Mo. Caterina Zecchini

In our Congregation, we prepare messages or quotations from the saints or the Foundress on special occasions and have everyone pick a message. On the 100th anniversary celebration of our Congregation, I was stunned by what I received: "...we can do one thing: to suffer."

Deep inside me, I was grumbling. Considering the bleak situation here in my country, I could not help but think: Isn't our suffering enough? Suffering is something most people would not want to hear about or experience. Some see it as curse, cause of misery, affliction, and a misfortune. A few take it as a blessing, and a highway toward heaven because suffering is inseparable from authentic Christian life. As I pondered more deeply the message of our foundress and the situation of my country, I began to see with clarity that our story is not just a story of suffering, but it is also a story of faithfulness. Faithfulness and suffering are intertwined with one another. Suffering makes one strong, mature, and resilient in life and in faith. "It is a jewel offered to us" said our beloved Mother foundress who embraced

suffering for the holy cause of the mission and taught her "daughters" to do the same. God's faithfulness is what sustains us amidst suffering. And this is what I realized as we celebrate this significant milestone in our Congregation in our country.

We have seen and experienced so much suffering. The struggles of our countrymen are far from over but amid all these, we can find a reason to celebrate – God's faithfulness. And so, despite our difficult situation, we were able to celebrate the occasion in the spirit of gratitude. We gathered for the Mass and the blessing of the Marian grotto. We prayed the rosary with the children, and shared about our eucharistic spirituality to the youth, to St. Anne's Group and with our suffering brothers and sisters.

Our celebration was simple, but it was an occasion to look back to the past and recognize God's constancy in our life. He journeyed with us in different moments of our life. I personally felt so blessed to be a part of this congregation, to celebrate its centenary year of existence and take part in the mission as Ancella. With all my poverty and weakness, Mo. Caterina assured me that I can still do one thing: "to suffer." Jesus, our Divine Master, gave us an example and we, as Ancelle journey together for a fully missionary church, following in his footsteps till the next centenaries of consecration and mission in the Church.



100th Anniversary Celebration...

"Towards Renewal and Full Surrender to God"

Sr. Christina Myint Myint Mu, MSBS

On the beautiful morning of May 16th this year, the Fr. Luigi Fizzoti Community had a simple commemorative celebration of the centennial anniversary of our foundation. Four priests participated in the solemn Eucharistic celebration, gathering around the seven MSBS sisters. The main celebrant was Fr. Paul Pa, a parish priest in Loikaw. Fr. Philip Aung Nge, Fr. Simone Plareh and Fr. Abele, who regularly celebrate Mass for our community, were his concelebrants. Two sisters of the Reparation, some neighbors and four search-ins were present during this celebration. After the Mass, we had the blessing of the grotto which is a memorial of the centennial anniversary of our Institute. This grotto was built thanks to the contributions of our friends and benefactors. The building of this grotto on the centenary of our Institute is fitting because Mother Mary has been with us since the beginning of the Institute. After the Mass, we shared a simple meal together with all the people who joined in the celebration.

The chapel was beautifully decorated with the picture of Mo. Caterina, 100th year logo and flowers. During the Mass, gazing at the Consecrated Host, the first MSBS Sisters' Mass at the poor attic of Palazzo Morosini at Calle Pestrin flashed back to my mind. "The apartment was very poor. A cupboard served as altar in the chapel where the holy Mass was often celebrated. Above the altar was a picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel, no pews at all." There, our first four sisters made their act of consecration in front of Fr. Lorgna on May 31, 1923. I could see the immense joy, hope and faith in the eyes of Mo. Caterina and her three companions.

This year, as we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of our Congregation, we paused to say "thank you" to our foundress, Mo. Caterina and to our first sisters who have gone before us. We look back thankfully and humbly to the past, yet confidently journey to the future, and we give thanks to God for His unfailing love and countless blessings to our



Congregation. Indeed, this centennial commemoration of the foundation of our congregation has provided us an opportunity for deep and prayerful reflection. It is a blessed time to rejoice and reminisce about the past with gratitude. It is a time for renewal, animating us to live fully our charism with all our suffering people in Myanmar and so to be God's witnesses to them.

After we sang a song of thanksgiving to God for 100 years of his faithfulness to the Institute, we promised to live always in total abandonment to God in accordance with Mo. Caterina's invitation to her daughters a hundred years ago "What we need is only a living faith, a boundless generosity, and a total abandonment into the arms of our Heavenly Father. The Lord will always love His little daughters, protect us from dangers, and shower on us His blessings. Have courage, my daughter, and have a boundless trust and a good spirit of sacrifice." (Dec. 29, 1920).

To God be glory and praise forever for his faithfulness of love!

100th Anniversary Celebration...

MSBS Centennial Celebration in Indonesia

Sr. Veronica Imelda, Uko, MSBS

Our mission house in Nita, Indonesia was opened only recently. We are still at the initial phase of our presence and mission here and so, the centennial anniversary celebration has led me to reflect on the very brief history of our Congregation in Indonesia and on my vocation journey as one of the first Indonesian Ancelle. I and Sr. Lin, who is currently assigned in the Philippines are the first Indonesian MSBS Sisters. After completing the formation period in the Philippines, we were sent for the mission in Indonesia. To begin the mission in our own land was not easy. The goodness and faithfulness of God never fail to accompany us along the way through other people and the community. We were welcomed and assisted by the Passionist priests and sisters.

On the 30th of May, the vigil of the centennial anniversary of our foundation, I and the four search-ins spent an hour in Eucharistic adoration. During adoration, I reflected on the life of our first sisters. Recalling their names one by one, I felt their presence with me. I felt gratitude for their fidelity and courage to continue God's mission until the end of their lives, and for their legacy. We are now harvesting the fruit of their sacrifices here in Flores-Maumere, Indonesia. I am sure that they are proud and happy to see that we are

growing and continuing the work of mission.

I am also very grateful to Father Polce, CP, who, despite his many pastoral activities, joined us in celebrating our 100th anniversary. In his brief reflection during the celebration, he told us that when he first met the MSBS and heard the name of Ancelle Missionarie del Santissimo Sacramento, he felt incredibly connected to this Congregation, especially when he learned about the Ancelle's love for the Eucharist. He also shared about his experience during MSBS celebration in the Philippines. He shared with us how he saw and felt the sisters' dedication to live and deepen the spirituality of the Congregation. Father encouraged us to remain Ancelle, to persevere in our vocation and keep our spiritual life and our apostolate balanced. He invited us to always be faithful to our mission and believe that Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament would always strengthen us. He said, "Before you do anything, don't forget to keep praying and ask for strength from Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, because Jesus will give strength to those who come and trust in Him." After listening to the sharing of Father, I reflected, and I felt proud to be an MSBS, to be called to be Christ for others, in our world that is in great need of **Christ's presence**.



Reflections

"Saying Yes to God"

Sr. Epa, MSBS and Sr. Isabella, MSBS

"In front of the tabernacle, we lay our ardent desire that His Kingdom of peace and love be extended from where the sun rises to where it sets."

Mo. Caterina Zecchini

May 31, 2023, marked an important milestone in our life as we said our "Yes" to the Lord. The endless joy and gratitude filled our hearts as that day we also commemorated the centennial anniversary of our Congregation. We were indeed so blessed and privileged to make our first profession on this day which marked the beginning of the new centennial journey of our Congregation.

No words could describe the excitement and joy in our hearts as we held the lighted candles and walked with the Mass celebrant during the entrance procession of the Mass. It was a simple yet beautiful and solemn celebration of thanksgiving. The Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Rev. Pablito M. Tagura, SVD. DD, the bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of San Jose, Mindoro. In front of our community, in the hands of our Delegate Superior, Sr. Rosanna Favero, we pronounced the formula of our consecration entrusting ourselves to the infinite love of God. One of our sisters, Sr. Gea (Tata), also professed her perpetual vows that day.

The canticle of Mary re-echoed in our hearts as we profess our vows to our spouse Jesus Christ. The vows that we professed marked our self-consecration to the Lord, our commitment to live our lives as Ancelle Missionarie continuing along the paths that Mo. Caterina, the first sisters and many other cooperators have paved for us. With great desire in our hearts, we turned our gaze to a wider horizon of the Church. Through our daily works, prayers, and sacrifices, we vow to support the missions and the missionaries and to be open so that, as Mo. Caterina said, "All the missions, without exception, shall receive the suffrage of our prayers and our sacrifices, our offerings, and material help that will be collected with particular interest."

It reminds us that indeed our religious consecration is a blessing, but it also requires total self-giving and fidelity to God. Despite our human imperfections, we do believe that with the grace of God and the help of Mother Mary, we will be able to be faithful to our Spouse and to his mission of building His Kingdom of Peace and love among us. As Ancelle, we are called to love the Blessed Virgin Mary as our dear Mother and to imitate Her in bringing Jesus to others, especially to those who do not know Him yet, and to let Him be loved by all men.

Reflections

The homily of Bishop Pablito emphasized the call to love Mary and imitate her as the role model of servanthood. He asked us “Do you love Jesus? If you do love him, you must also love Mary the Mother of Jesus, your spouse to whom you have consecrated yourselves today. By loving her as your mother-in-law you will also imitate her example in loving Jesus, her Son. Mary is the perfect example for us of how to be a Missionary and Servant of God.”

We thank God for all the blessings that we received along our vocation journey especially for calling us to be Ancelle. We owe our deep gratitude to our beloved Foundress Mo. Caterina who transmitted to us our missionary charism and eucharistic spirituality. We also

thank God for all the people who have contributed to our growth and vocation especially our general superior Mo. Giusy Sozza, the General Council, Sr. Rosanna Favero, Sr. Cle, and all the other Ancelle.

This isn't the end but just the beginning of the missionary journey that we have embraced. There will be challenges along the way, but we can surmount them if we make the Eucharist the center and source of our energy in doing God's mission. As Mo. Caterina said, "As long as God is glorified nothing else matters." We, the new generations of Ancelle, are called to continue the dreams of our dear first ten sisters who lit the candles of passion and love for the Eucharistic-Missionary charism and passed them on to the next generations.

Reflections

"Nomads in our Own Land"

Sr. Elizabeth Libel, MSBS

Karenni State used to be a tourist spot because of the beautiful mountains surrounding it. But now, it has become a refuge for people seeking a little and momentary protection from the turmoil and danger that hounds them in their own homes. The roads are rough, and the trip is also risky, but people are left with no better option. The scenic mountain decorated with flowers and plants fades into view as people live in misery, pain, heartbreak and other forms of suffering. They are crying for help, fearing what lies tomorrow, anxious about what to eat for the next day. It is so heartbreaking to see and hear the cries of children, who are hungry, longing for their home, dealing with the pain of losing loved ones and property, awaiting the return of their loved one from the battle. They spend sleepless nights, remaining alert because air strikes and artillery launches often happen. Many are sick due to lack of nutrition and medical assistance. "When will the war end?" is the repeated question of all.

The parents make the sacrifice of foregoing a meal or eating little so that their children could eat enough and so that they could save food for another day. People who used to be independent have learned to depend on

others' help, and their current situation of helplessness pains them. Where they are staying as refugees, their movements are restricted. They cannot build their own homes there. It is hard to get bamboo or wood from the forest and mountain. Even to get firewood, they still have to ask permission. Some refugee camps are experiencing shortage in water supply and so they try to stock rainwater when rain comes. When it's raining too hard, they worry that their shelter made of tarpaulin would collapse or tear apart. Situations seem very disappointing, but I see in them trust in God. They believe that there is God who will not abandon them and will always be with them. Seeing them live with hope consoles me and inspires me to continue what we are doing – accompanying them with prayer, facilitating bible sharing and teaching catechesis.

While in the refugee camps, I once experienced an airstrike. People ran in panic. They tried to move the old, the sick and the children to a safe place first. Then they observed the situation and hid. We were on the way and did not know where to hide. Luckily, we found a big tree and hid under it. After the airstrike, we went back to the refugee camps and gathered them once again. Some were still in fear. Some grew stiff and numb. They could not walk and run anymore. What touched me most was a child of about 5 years old, crying and asking his mother to give him the rosary while the air strike was happening. The little child knew who the real protector and helper was. Everyone recited prayers quietly. Others started moving to another place for fear of another air strike. Some of us remained in the area and indeed, the jet fighters came back thrice. My heart almost exploded with fear. I thought it was my very last night.





Reflections

We prayed to Mother Mary to protect us. We found a little comfort being in a place nearby a Marian grotto. That night, the wind blew strongly. I could no longer decipher its sound from the noise of hovering jet planes. Remembering that all stories of apparition began with the wind blowing brought me peace. I was convinced that Mother Mary will protect us. Fortunately, they did not throw the bomb. That experience made me feel how it is like to be in the shoes of the refugees and since then, every time I hear the jet fighter going around, my heart beats furiously with worry for the refugees' safety. Once, a woman approached me after bible sharing. She was crying and asking me to pray for her and her son. She only wanted prayer, which she considers most powerful. Her son is seriously ill and with tears in her eyes, she asked me to pray for him. Most refugees ask from us religious items knowing that only God can save them from the slavery of war and oppression. In most refugee camps, there are makeshift chapels where people gather and pray together.

We cannot do much to help them, but we do the best we can by being a bridge of people's generosity and

by accompanying them in this very difficult moment of their lives. We continue to go to the refugee camps to nurture their faith, to give them hope, to encourage them, to be in solidarity with them in their sufferings. I am not sure if they benefit from our presence or from what we try to give them, but for me, I always go back to the convent with the load of their suffering and pain in my heart and with the profoundly touching experience of their care, their willingness to share with one another, their unity amid their struggles, difficulties and trials.

Reflections

Mission in Malaysia Sr. Benedetta Day Day, MSBS

From the 5th to 17th of July 2023, I, with another co-sister, Sr. Melanie stayed in the Diocese of Penang in Malaysia, to facilitate liturgical formation session in the Parish of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Sts. Chastan and Imbert as well as for the Tribunal Staff of Peninsular Malaysia.

At the dawn of the 5th of July, we arrived in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and reached our destination – Penang State – a few hours before noon. I was truly excited to meet new persons and to start a new activity. Looking around, I noticed persons of different colors and heard different languages. And I recalled the words of our Foundress, Mother Caterina: “The love of Jesus knows no borders. It embraces the whole world.” Indeed, the diversity in this island is an image of Christ’s incarnation among all nations.

Although Christianity is the religion of the minority in this land, I noticed how profoundly rooted they are in the faith. Meeting them, I saw their love and desire to serve God above all else. It was precisely this love and desire to love and serve the Lord in a meaningful and appropriate way that pushed them to actively participate in the liturgical formation of the various liturgical ministries they carry out. First, we had the formation for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and altar boys. This was then followed by catechesis on the Eucharistic Celebration for acolytes, readers, catechists and volunteers. The various liturgical singing groups participated in seminar on the rules and guidelines on the use and choice of songs and music in the liturgy. It was interesting and enriching to meet the authors of liturgical songs and the liturgical team for celebrations in different languages and to discuss with them the guidelines according to the Roman Missal and the fundamental norms of the liturgy.

I witnessed their respect for the liturgical celebrations and their interest in knowing and understanding how to celebrate the liturgy in a solemn and meaningful way. They wanted to know the meaning of every ritual gesture and liturgical symbol and learn to correctly carry out their ministries. Above all, I was happy to see their desire to contribute to the Christian community celebrating the liturgy with faith, consciously and actively, which is in line with the goal of the liturgical renewal of the Second Vatican Council.

Another gift I received from the mission experience in

Malaysia was the opportunity to meet some workers and refugees from Myanmar. Listening to their life stories, the situation of their families in Myanmar who are deprived of everything, even their homes, their dangerous journeys and the many challenges they encounter, led us to pray in silence and then ask God to give them courage and hope. We also prayed together for peace in Myanmar.

It was consoling to hear that, despite their difficulties and the fact that they live among people of other religions in a foreign land, they did not forget their faith. Some who live among non-Catholics told us that they wanted to pray together in a Catholic way. It was in response to this desire that we spoke with them about the missionary rosary and prayed together. Their faces marked by suffering expressed joy at seeing the nuns and finding themselves together in the Church after a long stay in a foreign land. I remembered how in the heart of our Foundress the desire to bring all people to God, to bring all souls closer to him, burned. All of my meetings and activities have been accompanied by the same desire and prayer that the charism and mission of our Institute can expand more and more. I’ve witnessed how the desire to love, serve and hope is strengthened by the desire to know Jesus and his Church. Even now, there is a need for a greater number of people dedicated to teaching, to forming and accompanying the Christian people in the journey of faith. For this reason, I now pray with more intensity the prayer of our Foundress: «...draw to your loving heart all those who do not know and love you yet. Send your messengers to bring the light of Your Gospel to all distant lands...”



Reflections

Mission Camp

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Reflections

Reflections

WyD 2023: The Joy of Fraternity

Sr. Van, MSBS

The youth are the present and the future of the world and the Church. They have an important role in building up the missionary Church and in the proclamation of the Kingdom of God in a changing world. To ensure that they are up to this challenging task, the Church needs to accompany them along the journey. World Youth Day is one of the Church's ways of showing Her care for the youth, who have the power to bring renewal and freshness to the Church and the world. It is a celebration of faith and a testimony of fraternity in diversity. It offers young people a special space to experience God's love.

After a long period of social distancing and isolation due to COVID-19 pandemic, in God's grace, youth from all over the world gathered with Pope Francis in celebrating World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal last August 1 to 6, 2023. The theme chosen for the occasion communicated joy and invited participants and all the young people to ponder Mary's action described in the gospel of St. Luke. The Virgin Mary "arose and went with haste" (Luke 1:39) to visit her cousin Elizabeth. More than 1.5 million young people across the globe actively participated in this event.

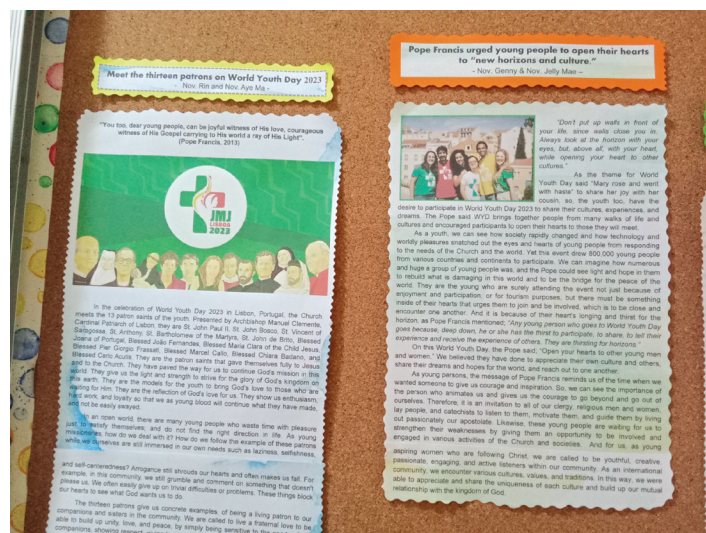
What I found beautiful and impressive in this year's World Youth Day was the City of Joy where young people had the chance to create remarkable memories and have unforgettable encounters with Jesus and other young people from different

cultures and backgrounds. They welcomed one another as brothers and sisters in one family; the Church. Participants reveled at having experienced the synodal journey of the universal Church through discussions and reflections on peace, hope, intercultural dialogue, and human fraternity. They shared about their deep encounter with Jesus in the liturgical celebrations and the sacrament of reconciliation. As Mother Mary and her cousin Elizabeth rejoiced at meeting each other, the World Youth Day also offered young people a beautiful opportunity to have an encounter filled with joy, hope, and sense of fraternity.

Despite the gloom of war, poverty and other forms of human suffering, the Lord does not fail to send us proofs of His love and care and to draw us to the beauty of hope, fraternity, and solidarity. I am very happy and grateful to witness the generosity, eagerness, creativity, enthusiasm and sense of belonging to the Church of young people who deeply love God amid the blinding attractions of the secular world. Having been summoned by the Church, they arose and went in haste to share their joy and life experiences with others.

In our community, we participated in this important event in the Church, not physically but spiritually. We reflected on topics that were discussed on World Youth Day and then shared our reflections with each other and posted them on the bulletin board of our community where everyone can read them. Our spiritual participation as an international community showed me the value of harmony, peace, joy, fraternity, and hope among us young people who were called by God from different cultures and backgrounds to partake in his mission.

Pope Francis said on this occasion: "We will all rediscover in Lisbon – with God's help – the joy of fraternal embrace between peoples and generations, an embrace of reconciliation and peace, an embrace of new missionary fraternity." Indeed, World Youth made us experience the joy of fraternity and reminded us to continue to carry this joy to places where war and division exist, where forgiveness and love do not have space, to those whose voices cannot be heard, to where we live, and to people whom we encounter every day.



Reflections

The Cross-Over

Sr. Melanie S. Reyes, MSBS

Most people fear growing old. That fear is apparent in the various attempts of people to hide the signs of aging – wrinkles, gray hair, sagging flesh, and creaking bones. Perhaps, it is because of the physical suffering, the helplessness and uselessness we usually associate with aging. Personally, I fear growing old more than I fear death. I dread having to rely on someone, becoming like an infant, only this time, I would be more or less aware and certainly feel a sense of loss for the independence, agility, keen vision, and clear memory I sometimes take for granted.

On the other hand, seeing old people, who have grown wise over the years, who radiate serenity and joy fascinates me. As a religious sister, seeing an elderly nun or priest, who have renounced so many good things in life, who have surely seen both the good and the bad side of reality and yet look so content eases away the dread of growing old and replaces it with the challenge and inspiration to reach that stage in life, if God wills it, with gratitude and grace.

When I've met and spent time with some of our elderly sisters in Italy, the reality of aging had once again surfaced in my consciousness. I saw some who are burdened by sickness, and the suffering that naturally comes with aging. But I also personally witnessed how physical aging could lose to the youthfulness of the heart. One eighty-year-old sister is permanently stooped so low because of sickness, and yet continue to serve her fellow sisters, doing the laundry, sewing, cooking, and other services. Other sisters, having lost their physical strength faithfully spend time in prayer and meditation, praying for the young sisters, for the mission and for different intentions. On recreation time,



their resounding laughter is a reminder that amidst pain and difficulties, it is possible to have fun and enjoy God's simple blessings.

In our short stay with the community of elderly sisters, they have enriched us with the stories of the past, their experiences during the early years of our Congregation, which helped us truly understand that the Congregation is built upon their sacrifices and persevering love for God and for the charism. They have strengthened us with their dream and hope to see the continuous expansion of the mission and the spread of the charism and mission. Another elderly sister, on the last day of our stay in their community, spoke to me with words of encouragement. I did not understand everything she said but her sincerity and enthusiasm in speaking those words filled me in. Looking back to the shared moments with our elderly sisters made me recall and appreciate Pope Francis' words in his homily on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord: "For if the young are called to open new doors, the elderly hold the keys. An institute remains youthful by going back to its roots, by listening to its older members. There is no future without this encounter between the old and the young. There is no growth without roots and no flowering without new buds. There is never prophecy without memory, or memory without prophecy."

As we celebrate our 100th Anniversary, this encounter between the young and the old members of the Congregation signified the crossing over from the past to the future, the encounter and meaningful exchange between the memory and prophecy.





MSBS Centennial Anniversary in Italy

Mo. Giusy Sozza, MSBS





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Merry Christmas!

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