



CONGREGATION LIFESTREAM

WE ARE DIFFERENT YET ONE

“The way of Jesus...to walk united with our differences.”

-Pope Francis

Volume IX Issue No. 1 January- February 2021

Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing, Casa Santo Spirito, Via dei Bevilacqua 60, 00165, Rome Italy

PRIORESSES ELECTED AMID PANDEMIC



*Sr. Ma. Madalena
Prioress of Olinda*



*Sr. Mary Thomas
Prioress of Manila*

OLINDA

SR. CONSUELO TAVARES, OSB

Sr. Maria Madalena Ferreira de Mendonça was re-elected Prioress of Olinda for a term of three years during the Election Chapter held from January 9-10. M. Maoro Sye delegated M. Angela Strobel to conduct the election.

In addition to the prior discernment process in choosing and suggesting candidates, we also took into consideration the care for the life of each one of the Sisters by following the restrictions such as physical distancing, the use of masks and frequent hand hygiene and use of alcohol gel. Not all the

sisters were able to be present for the Chapter. This affected specially the participation of the elderly sisters who reside in Recife and in Barbalha. Besides, two sisters in Caruaru were observing quarantine because of the COVID. We felt that they accompanied us with their prayers.

A few days before, we received a letter from Sr. Madalena with all the detailed instructions so that the Chapter could be carried out with maximum security by avoiding proximity in all places. In the refectory each sister received a dish towel to dry her own dishes. Thus, each sister, upon arriving at the Sta. Gertrude Academy, the seat of the Priory, could quickly see that the environment had been carefully prepared in all aspects. The seats were marked with the names of each one in the church, in the refectory and in the chapter hall. Sanitary prescriptions and respect for social distancing were well understood as sisterly care for each one. The use of the mask was very strict. We had our meals in silence. We exercised with zeal the care that Pope Francis speaks to us so much.

We thank Mother Angela who conducted the election with maximum security and tranquility.

We ask the Lord to grant Sr. Madalena good health, wise discernment to conduct our Priory in this new period in such a way that each, and every one of us "absolutely prefers nothing to the love of Christ."

IN THIS ISSUE

Manila/AIM.....	2	Pope Francis' Lenten Message....	9
Tribute to our Senior Sisters ...	3	Events.....	10
Seoul / Casa	8		

MANILA

SR. ROSALINA FAJARDO, OSB

The 23rd Election Chapter 2021 of the Manila Priory held at St. Scholastica's Center of Spirituality, Tagaytay on February 15-16 made history in the life of the priory on account of the raging COVID-19 pandemic. Sr. Mary Thomas Prado was elected Prioress for a term of five years. M. Maoro Sye delegated Sr. Adelaida Ygrubay, the out-going prioress, to install Sr. Mary Thomas on April 11, 2021, the second Easter Sunday and feast of the Divine Mercy.

The introduction of the opening liturgy of the Chapter aptly described the unique scenario prior to the Chapter, *“In our avid preparations for the election chapter 2021, the world pandemic which has wreaked havoc everywhere in the world and in everyone’s life suddenly disrupted our own plans: unexpected scenes of hospitalization of some Sisters, the lockdown of the Priory House and St. Scholastica’s College, Manila premises; the recuperation and temporary relocation of most of the Priory House Community to St. Scholastica’s Center of Spirituality, Tagaytay, the twice postponement of the Chapter and, most of all a change of venue from Manila to Tagaytay.”*

Ever trusting in God’s mercy and compassion through individual and communal prayers, the sick sisters recovered by mid-January. In a common letter dated January 14, Sr. Adelaida announced that the Generalate had re-set for the third time the Election Chapter to February 15-16, 2021. Consequently, the Preparatory Commission led by Sr. Mary Thomas revised the plans, preparations and arrangements before and during the chapter at the Spirituality Center, Tagaytay which had to be prepared, cleaned, and disinfected. Likewise, the permit to gather in big group was secured. To ensure the safety and protection of all, the electorate was enjoined to strictly observe health protocol like the 7-10 days quarantine including the delivery of packed food in every room thrice a day. Although some of our elderly and sick sisters from St. Benedict’s Home, Marikina voluntarily waived their voting rights due to health issues, they were our prayer warriors before and during the chapter.

On February 15, Sr. Lumen Gloria Dungca, vicaress general, who was delegated by M. Maoro

Sye to preside over the Election Chapter, boldly challenged the leadership and each Sister to shape one’s heart attuned to the needs of the communities and the priory according to the compassionate heart of God in this difficult time.

On election day, February 16, preceded by half an hour adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, and after the singing of Te Deum, the sisters made a simple middle bow followed by the clapping of hands as a sign of acceptance and support to the new prioress-elect Sr. Mary Thomas in lieu of the traditional Benedictine kiss of peace. In gratitude for God’s abiding presence in our election chapter, the sisters gathered again for holy mass.

Meet our Prioress-elect Sr. Mary Thomas Prado, 61 years old and professed for 33 years. A multifaceted person, she served as President St. Scholastica’s College, Manila. In 2014, she was elected prioress of Windhoek Priory, Namibia. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Medical Technology before her entrance to the convent, and as a sister the postgraduate degrees in Psychology from Gregorian University in Rome and Ministry from the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.



During an online meeting of the AIM International Team on February 3, Sr. Regina Tesch was welcomed as new member. Sr. Regina was introduced to the other members and likewise the other members to her. They exchanged news from the different monasteries and congregations and deliberated on how the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* could be applied in the monasteries and communities.



Tribute
to our SENIOR SISTERS



SENIORS IN THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT.

The word *senior* occurs often in RB. We see them giving a counsel to the abbot (3:2), and helping him. We see

them also in relationship to the young brothers in 4:50 and 46:5. In this context Benedict gives them the adjective “spiritual”. They are, it seems, persons who are merciful with sins and shortcomings of others, and can keep what was told in secret, in their soul, in order to strengthen also the younger ones. We meet them also in the dormitory, mixed with the juniors (22:3,7); it seems they bring some quietness to the behaviour of the younger brothers. Their blessing is appreciated (63:15f). And when nothing helps the wavering brother in his sinfulness, wise seniors are sent to them; Benedict qualifies them here as: “mature and wise”, who under the cloak of secrecy, support the wavering brother and urge him to make satisfaction in order to be inserted again in the community (27:2f). We understand that the abbot has to eat with the guests sometimes, but “he should leave one or two seniors” with the brothers. Here as in the time of spiritual reading (48:17), it is the matter of silence and good behaviour. As the word “senior” has so many spiritual connotations, it is used also for the novice master, “a senior is given to them, he is apt to win souls”. (58:6)

If we see all the texts together, we can imagine that these seniors were important elements in the community of Benedict, helping the abbot, spreading understanding and mercy, but also caring for a good monastic atmosphere which favours silence and a peaceful living in community. They are important for the younger members, trying to be persons, where others may read, how monastic life educates to a mature being, spiritually and humanly.

Sr. Aquinata Böckmann, OSB, 83

Remember the days of old;
consider the years of many
generations;
ask your father, and he will show you,
your elders, and they will tell you.

Deuteronomy 32:7

INSIGHTS

Sr. Roseve Balagat, 80, Manila Priory.

When it’s almost twilight time, I open my windows and look with gratitude to the big mango tree that supplies me with oxygen and amuse me with the light and shadows of their branches and leaves as the wind blows through them. Sometimes I listen to the different songs and sounds of the birds that hop from one branch to another giving me peace.

Sickness and death are two realities I have to accept living here in St. Benedict’s Home. It always reminds me that all of us will end up that way someday. I ask myself the hard questions on love, how much have I loved and how much did I allow myself to be loved. In the process, did I learn to be tender without being soft; to be gracious without being ingratiating; kind without being sentimental and understanding without being judgmental.

Sr. Margareta Maria Kakololo, 81, Windhoek Priory

Becoming an elderly is a secret thing in one’s body. I did not recognize that I was becoming old, but now I see myself that every day there is movement in my body. I feel different in my walking. Today, I feel it in my back and tomorrow, my legs, feet, eyes, etc. I feel I am not as I was when I was young. I start to forget a lot. I am becoming aware of is I am losing my hearing slowly. I seem to think that people do not speak loud enough that I can hear them. This makes me feel that they are speaking about me, but they are not. I start to talk loud because I think people do not understand me. I see that I cannot sleep well at night.

I am becoming more loving and prayerful than when I was young. I always want to do some work but I do not have the strength anymore. My love for the community becomes stronger. I am trying my best to be at peace with my community and everyone.

next page

TRIBUTE, from page 3

Every day, I feel younger than yesterday. I thank God for what he had done for me. He protects me. He made me healthy when I was very sick and I am still alive until today. Thanks be to God!

Sr. Lucida Schmieder, 93, Olinda Priory

Aging - yes, it is a reality, which has to be assumed by each person. However, the most important is, how to age? Graciously!

Asking in time and always again, the grace of aging well. With the words of Dom Helder Câmara, *“to improve by aging, to learn with wine and, above all, to escape the terrible danger of aging, becoming vinegar..”*

When I was asked to contribute a piece to our Sister Cristina's 50th jubilee feast on February 10, reflecting, I found that our community currently has 16 members, the majority (12 sisters from 79 to 102 years old) are elderly. Only 4 sisters between 44 and 74 years old. I was alert and thrilled at the thought of wanting to dig and discover the deep treasures of this community in the aging process.

Inspired by the parable of the 10 virgins (Mt 25, 1-13) and the word of Jesus: “I am the way, the truth and the life” (Jn 14,6) I realized that we are three groups of virgins. Five prudent virgins who walk, run, move, serving, working, managing, loving. Another five virgins seem enlightened, informed and warm, sing and enchant, speak, honoring people who have a party or jubilee and six other wise virgins who know how to live, giving life to others, contributing to the community's contentment and joy. Of course, there are also disenchantments and unwanted announcements, due to the aging process of both elderly sisters who suffer from dementia / Alzheimer's, one singing too much "Hal lo, hal lo, hal lo!" Another scream of horror when receiving the bath, another one seems to cry and laugh at the same time, but in all of this, something is funny, making you smile.

It is special and it passes! Reflecting, I discovered three dimensions: virtues, strengths, gifts that are summed up in a word of Jesus Christ that says: “I AM the way, the truth and the life”. (Jn 14,6)

Sr. Alesia Beer, 95, Haus St. Benedikt

When I turned 90 I believed that my old age

would finally begin and that I would sit in my comfortable armchair for the remaining time that God still gives me, lit by the morning sun. A few days later, I learned that plastic bags were no longer allowed to be used. The following night I got the idea to sew fabric bags. I had enough material, everything was given. The Lord had given me rich presents. It did not stop at the bags. New ideas came to me at night. The result was warm socks, hats, scarves, children's clothes, sewn and knitted, everything for the poor children. Lately I have even made dolls. I made them with joy and gave them with joy as well. I did everything with joy and the work gave me new strength. While working I would forget all about age and pain.

Sr. Vitoria Souza Borges, 96

Sorocaba Priory.

With surprise, but also joy, I received a request: to write something to be included in the Congregation's Lifestream on how to grow happily in age. I have a lot of life experience, but not different from anyone with the same age. Life is a gift from God. It is a wonderful gift that each one received in the past, remains beautiful in the present and sustains hope in the future: it means, Heaven, Eternal Life. Let us wait for our time to go well through the stages. Of course, without looking afar, but day by day, keeping us entirely at the presence of our God, the generous donor of life's gift, thanking Him for this. This gift came packaged. A fine, beautiful package that arouses curiosity. Unpack this gradually. One must be attentive to discover what kind of gift it is. It's the Human Being! You Me Others

A proverb says: "Who sees face, does not see heart". Then it is necessary to be patient to discover gradually... the beautiful core of each person: the heart, feelings, emotions, and reasons to live. For each human being, common living becomes the reason for being cheerful, tolerant, patient, peaceful, humble, understanding, helpful ... until reaching the precious core: Love!

German Sisters of Peramiho. Keep death always before your eyes. This is the reality of old age. But because we are surrounded by many young ones, we really do not feel old. The joy of old age is that one is not pressured by responsibility anymore. But still we continue to work because as the German proverb says, "When I rest I rust."



MANILA. l-r: Sr. Madonna (70) (Sr. Maura (101), Sr. Veronica (93), Sr. Fidelis (89) Sr. Remedios (95)



MANILA. l-r: Sr. Fe Andrea (86), Sr. Regina (91) Sr. Mary Placid (86), Sr. Windfrieda (100), Sr. Genevieve, (84)



OLINDA. From l-r: Sr. Salésia (83), Sr. Ellingera (93) Sr. Ursula (102), Sr. Werburga (90), Sr. Felicitas(90), Sr. Betânia (85), Sr. M. Lúcida(93)



HAUS ST. BENEDIKT. *l-r: Sr. Maria Georg (91), Sr. Marita (84), Sr. Alesia (95), Sr. Christiane (84), Sr. Margareta Maria (86), Sr. Martha (82), Sr. Edhilt (80)*



Sr. Hildetrud (88)



DAEGU. *Front l-r: Sr. Sigilinde (93), Sr. Silvia (63), Sr. Placida (80), Regina (90), Sr. Gabriele (81), Back l-r: Sr. Eligia (78), Sr. Luzia (86), Sr. Gertrud (81), Sr. Simona (81), Sr. Maria Paul (81)*



NORFOLK. *Seated (l-r): Sr. Elizabeth (79), Sr. Andrea (87), Sr. Rita (86) Sr. Mary Joseph (87) Standing: Sr. Cecilia (89), Sr. Frances (86), Sr. Bernardine (93), Sr. Catherine (81), Sr. Carole Ann (80), Sr. Pia R (81),*



TUTZING. *l-r: Sr. Ewalda (96), Sr. Gertrud (93), Sr. Maria Riccardi (93), Sr. Maria Wynfrith (92), Sr. Gotthelma (96), Sr. Dietgard (95), Sr. Maria Linus (89), Sr. Ermenilde (+), Sr. Konrada (93), Sr. Stephania (+)*

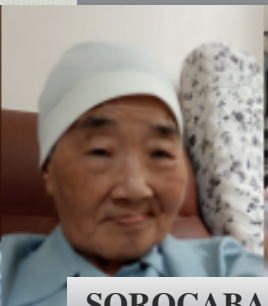


WINDHOEK. *l-r: Sr. Eufemia (88), Sr. Anna Maria (80), Sr. Elisa (84), Sr. Erika (83), Sr. Gertraud (75), Sr. Agrippina (80), Sr. Margareta Maria (81), Sr. Erwina (74), Sr. Katarina (86)*



PERAMIHO. *l-r: Sr. Guntheris (94), Sr. Elisabeth (79), Sr. Heimrada (86), Sr. Maria Goretti (88)*

MADRID. *Sr. Ana (90), Sr. Teresa (99)*



SOROCABA. *Sr. Vitoria (96), Sr. Domingas (83), Sr. Fabiola (83), Sr. Maria Celina (89), Sr. Anselma (86), Sr. Gloria (80)*

SEOUL: SERVICE TO ELDERLY NEIGHBORS

SR. ILLUMINA LEE, OSB

Communities continue to say prayers for the end of the Corona virus pandemic. Sisters take steps to launch service of goodwill one after another to reach out to neighbors in need. This heartwarming service got started by the community at Seongnam station. Sr. Illumina, then the superior of the station, visited the elderly living alone, bringing them gifts of packed lunch when ‘Chusuk-Korean Thanksgiving Feast’ neared in September 2020. As Sr. Illumina left the station after being elected as prioress of Seoul priory, Sr. Veritas, the new superior, continued the elderly care service. At present she and the volunteers from Sangdaewon parish visit 9 numbers of elderly neighbors with food prepared by themselves once a week.

Meanwhile, on 27 January 2021 juniors at the priory house prepared packed lunch with pan-fried fish fillet and spicy stir-fried pork and donated them together with the quarantine supplies such as hand sanitizers and masks offered by sisters to ‘Donam-dong community center’ that cares for the elderly in need in the area.



Junior sisters packing packed lunch

CASA CELEBRATES FEASTS

SR. ANTOINETTE ADELMAN, OSB



M. Maoro on her feastday

The Benedictine Feast of Sts. Maur and Placid could be celebrated with full attention to Mother

Maoro this year. Perhaps for the first time in her formandee community. Yet this was not totally true; for the Congregation formandees were represented in the person of Sr. Maria Johanna Nakthasharum of Punalur who represents 'the relay torch' until the arrival of the 2021 IJP participants. Among the festivities of the day, the Sisters presented an evening of joyous entertainment beginning fittingly with "If We Hold On Together".

The Solemnity of St. Scholastica was made special with the presence of Sr. Vania Maria Toscano celebrating her golden jubilee of monastic profession. The gold and joy of the day included a special afternoon coffee colloquy with entertainment. Yet the weekly evening adoration remembering the pandemic conditions continues.



Sr. Vania on her golden jubilee of profession

HEARTY WELCOME TO THE IJP PARTICIPANTS

The International Juniors’ Program in the Casa starts on March 1, 2020 and ends on February 13, 2022. The participants are from the following priories:

- Ndanda: Sr. Mary Agnes Mussa Mkinda
- Peramiho: Sr. Maria Eliza Kibonge
- Windhoek: Sr. Maria Clementine Kayando
- Seoul: Sr. Maria Kolbe Hong

RENEWING FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE: POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE FOR LENT 2021

Christopher Wells
Vatican News
February 12, 2021

In his message for Lent 2021, Pope Francis calls on the faithful to “renew our faith, draw from the living waters of hope, and receive with open hearts the love of God.”

Pope Francis focuses on the three theological virtues in his Lenten message for 2021, inviting the faithful to “renew our faith, draw from the living waters of hope, and receive with open hearts the love of God.”

Grounding his reflection on the Paschal Mystery, the Pope says, “This Lenten journey... is even now illumined by the light of the resurrection, which inspires the thoughts, attitudes and decisions of the followers of Jesus.”

He goes on to say that the journey of conversion, through fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, “makes it possible for us to live lives of sincere faith, living hope, and effective charity.”

Accepting and bearing witness to the truth

The Holy Father explains “accepting and living the truth revealed in Christ means, first of all, opening our hearts to God’s word.” Through fasting, “experienced as a form of self-denial,” we are able “to rediscover God’s gift and recognize that, created in His image and likeness, we find our fulfillment in Him.” Fasting, too, by helping us recognize our own poverty, helps us to love both God and neighbour.

“Lent is a time for believing,” the Pope says, “for welcoming God into our lives and allowing Him to ‘make His dwelling’ in us.”

The ‘living water’ that helps us on the journey

Pope Francis relates the virtue of hope to the ‘living water’ that Jesus promises the Samaritan woman at the well. This is not the physical water the woman is expecting, but rather the Holy Spirit who is given through the Paschal Mystery.

Although hope may seem challenging in fragile and uncertain times, “Lent is precisely the season of hope, when we turn back to God.”

Hope, he says, “is given to us as inspiration and interior light” through “recollection and silent prayer.” The experience of hope in Lent, he says, “means receiving the hope of Christ, who gave His life on the Cross and was raised by God on the third day.”

Love, the highest expression of faith and hope

“Love is a leap of the heart,” says Pope Francis. “It brings us out of ourselves and creates bonds of sharing and communion.”

The Holy Father emphasizes the need for “social love” in building up “a civilization of love.”

“Love is a gift that gives meaning to our lives,” he says. Love helps us to see all men and women as our brothers and sisters. Charity is multiplied when given with love, as we see not only in the Scriptures, but in our own lives, too, when we give alms “with joy and simplicity.”

“To experience Lent with love,” says Pope Francis, “means caring for those who suffer or feel abandoned because of the Covid-19 pandemic.” He invites us to “speak words of reassurance, and help others to realize that God loves them as sons and daughters.”

A journey of conversion

After reminding us that “every moment of our lives is a time for believing, hoping, and loving,” Pope Francis concludes by saying:

"The call to experience Lent as a journey of conversion, prayer and sharing of our goods, helps us – as communities and as individuals – to revive the faith that comes from the living Christ, the hope inspired by the breath of the Holy Spirit and the love flowing from the merciful heart of the Father."

The life of a monk ought to be a continuous Lent...by devoting ourselves to prayer with tears, to reading, to compunction of heart and self-denial...During these days, therefore, we will add to the usual measure of our service something by way of private prayer and abstinence from food or drink, so that each of us will have something above the assigned measure to offer God of his own will *with the joy of the Holy Spirit* (1Thess 1:6).

RB 49: 1, 4, 5



Daegu, February 5
Sr. Consilia An and Sr. Terra Lee



Olinda, February 5
S. Maria Alaíde Bezerra da Silva & S. Macionila Campos de Oliveira

REST IN PEACE

- + Sr. Patricia Alcaez, 84, who died in Marikina on January 4.
- + Sr. Dorothy Frances Brooks, 93, who died in Norfolk on January 18.
- + Sr. Sophia Tshavuka, 103, who died in Windhoek on January 26.
- + Sr. Friedlinde Freudenreich, 99, who died in Haus St. Benedikt/Tutzing on January 31.
- + Sr. Gabriela Mkulu, 47, who died in Dar es Salaam on February 3.
- + Sr. Anatolia Arugodhi, 75, who died in Windhoek on February 10.
- + Sr. Ermenilde Jehle, 85, who died in Tutzing on February 18.



Sr. Lioba Sr. Marie Rose

- Sr. Lioba Yang from Ndanda Priory to Seoul Priory
- Sr. Marie Rose Xavier from Daegu Priory back to Punalur, India, her home community

VISIT OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA

The Madrid community welcomed the image of our Lady of Fatima that stayed with them on February 26 till the next day.



l-r: Sr. Esmeralda, Sr. Teresa, Sr. Ana, Sr. Pachomia



ELECTION CHAPTERS

- March 6-7: Ndanda Priory
c/o Sr. Regina Tesch and Sr. Katharina Mtitu
- March 20-21: Nairobi Priory
c/o Sr. Regina Tesch and Sr. Katharina Mtitu

**THAT IN ALL THINGS
GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED.
THE GENERALATE**