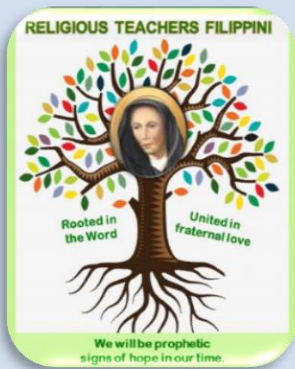


Pontifical Institute of the Religious Teachers Filippini



Communicating...

No. 4

***Generalate
April – June 2020***

Dear Sisters,

This bulletin, April through June, is issued at a time when the whole world continues to be restricted because of COVID-19. The collection of events in this bulletin, directly/indirectly, references the effect that the pandemic has had in our lives these past months. Undoubtedly, we have all been challenged in diverse ways, some more, others less. How surprisingly if anyone would admit to not have been transformed, affected, or heartened by the occurrence of this virus among us. Depending on your country, the degree of restrictions vary right now. At the same time, we are aware that a “new normalcy” will be in place whenever this is behind us. What will be our response to this?

Daughters of Saint Lucy Filippini, we have been united during this pandemic in our prayer imploring Mary, the Queen of the World to protect our brothers and sisters throughout the world. Our two burning candles converted into living candles because you prayed more ardently and sought ways to reach out to those in need, exercising resourceful means to stay in touch with those we serve, especially our children, families, and the poor. You are commended for your initiative and creativity to go out of yourselves and to make a difference. What an inner joy and peace when we know we continue to touch the lives of others in their need, aloneness and grief and show we are genuine in our caring for them. Even in these times, our Mission remains alive!

We thank God for the many blessings that have been ours even in the midst of these unparalleled times. Continue to be safe, and let us pray that the Lord continues to give us the vision, the energy, and the desire to be prophetic signs of hope, the hope we have been called to be for others.

Sincerely in the Lord,

Sister Ascenza Tizzano, MPF
General Superior

Mater Christi Region, Medstead, England

Single Steps Nursery, Love, Learn, Live

The Nursery School in the Mater Christi Region, Medstead, England, has always been a significant part of the sisters' ministry. Unfortunately, the Nursery School as we knew it, was closed for a short block of time. Similar to other places of ministry owned by the Institute, the school has taken a new direction, a creative approach exercising the best use of resources, and the gifts each person has to offer. We introduce the turn the



Ophea Waite-Uden - Manager

Nursery School has taken to best utilize the building that belongs to the Institute. How gratified and grateful the Institute is that under the leadership of Sister Barbara Ranere the building has been renovated and leased to Ophea Waite-Uden, its new manager

LOVE, LEARN, LIVE is the heart of *Single Steps Nursery*, this restored pre-school nursery in the beautiful setting of Saint Lucy Convent. Its doors were opened on the 6th of January 2020. The Manager, Ophea Waite-Uden, who consistently scores 'Outstanding' with Ofsted, (Office of Standards for Education) directs this program for children six months to 4-year-olds. Our sisters who qualify will assist in this excellent program together with other staff members.

Currently, fulfilling the requirements required by the country, Sister Mary Mancham, MPF, from Regina Pacis Region, India, is qualified as an early childhood care assistant, and is very actively involved. Sister Mary Mancham studied at Alton College in the United Kingdom for this specific role. (See photos) Two additional sisters from India are currently preparing to join Sister Mary Mancham, but plans have been interrupted with the recent lockdown in their country. These sisters will also complete their studies in England before they are able to become a part of the *Single Steps Nursery*.

During this COVID-19 period, the Nursery remains open for the children of parents who are key workers such as doctors, nurses, lawyers, etc. The staff keeps in touch regularly with the remaining registered children, who are at home, via the latest technological methods. Recently, the entire group, those at school and those at home, enjoyed an indoor Teddy Bear Picnic!

The mission as a nursery is to provide the children with the ideal educational bedrock in an environment of inclusivity and care so that as they grow and move to the next stage in their schooling, they will already have all they need to be instilled within them to be successful. They base their education's ethos on three principles: LOVE, LEARN, LIVE.

Sr. Mary Mancham loving her work!



Solidarity with the Suffering during the Pandemic

Regina Pacis Region, India

*"Prayer to God and solidarity with the poor and suffering are inseparable."
(Pope Francis)*



"A hand held out is a sign; a sign that immediately speaks of closeness, solidarity, and love." During the pandemic, "when the whole world was prey to a virus that brought pain and death, despair and bewilderment, how many outstretched hands we have seen!" (Pope Francis)

Prayer has been a significant weapon to fight the pandemic for the community of the Regina Pacis Region, India. One example of the intensity of their prayer, as the pandemic was spreading from country to country, India included, the Regional House at Janampet, India, and other communities of the Region spent twenty-four hours of prolonged adoration before the Lord pleading God's mercy upon the people of the world.



In addition to their intense prayer, the community at the Regional House and Munagalapalli readily extended helping hands to the neediest. Aware and sensitive of the struggle of the people in the surrounding villages, especially Prakash Nagar and Munagalapalli, where the people are just daily wage workers and who couldn't go to work due to lockdown, the sisters supplied provisions: rice, oil, onions, snacks, soaps, etc., to almost three hundred families in a spirit of prayer and penance. The sisters moved from house to house distributing the packages, keeping in mind the words of our Holy Foundress who often urged her Maestre *"My daughters, give alms and refuse no one. Charity is what maintains the schools."* It was a moving experience where the sisters felt one with the poor in their concrete situations. The people lacked food and hope and were struggling under the scorching sun.

The sisters also joined with the Capuchin Fathers and a group of village people to prepare and distribute food packets for the immigrant workers who were walking for days to reach their home due to sudden lockdown.

The Region expresses their appreciation to the sisters who support the Mission Fund of the Institute, whose hearts are always generous to help the missions. The Sisters of the Regina Pacis Region are grateful to the Lord for giving them this privilege to be His compassionate heart and hands during this pandemic.

Berat, Albania – Celebrating Saint Lucy's Feast and Spirit!



This year the sisters at Berat, Albania, celebrated the feast of our Holy Foundress, Saint Lucy Filippini, with greater joy and surprise! Because of the pandemic, the community was expecting to have a private and/or virtual celebration. What a pleasant, great surprise for them when they learned that His Excellency Giovanni Peragine, Bishop of Southern Albania, would join them on the afternoon of May 12, 2020.

The mission church was re-opened immediately, and the sisters celebrated the feast with the greatest possible solemnity, inviting some of the faithful who live near the convent, thus representing the small Christian Community. The Liturgy was concelebrated by the Bishop with Don Giuseppe Tosi, the pastor, and twenty people present for the Eucharistic celebration. One can imagine the great joy to sing and praise the Lord together after two months of isolation. Following the celebration of Eucharist, refreshments were enjoyed with those who were part of this unexpected presence of Bishop Peragine.



At home, the children together with their families and guided by their teachers online virtually celebrated Saint Lucy's feast, with prayers, videos, drawings, and poems. The very young, dedicated their affectionate masterpieces to Saint Lucy: "Flowers to the Holy Teacher."



On the days preceding the feast of Saint Lucy, the sisters followed and participated with great interest in the initiatives launched online by some of the communities in the Province of the Sacred Heart in Italy. Though distant, they felt truly united as one family!

In this period of the pandemic, the sisters were aware of the families who suddenly found themselves in financial difficulties, and together with intensely personal and community prayer and availability, they distributed necessary items. At intervals, they prepared food for those in need in a Christian spirit of love and sharing.

A mother from the school observing the sisters' commitment to witness in the footsteps of Lucy, in a brief reflection expressed this:

"Lucy tells us that life is made to be given: she lived just this way, ... but the value of the gift of self is universal, it is the secret of true happiness for everyone. The very name 'Lucy' is the plan; a person is 'luminous' to the measure that one gives of self to others. ... Each of us, in reality, can be a precious gift."



Mater Boni Consilii Region (Ethiopia) Closes 50th Anniversary!

The sisters in Mater Boni Consilii Region celebrated the feast of Saint Lucy more simply due to the pandemic. This was a great disappointment to the sisters since 2019 – 2020 was a year of thanksgiving to the Lord for the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Institute in Ethiopia.

His Excellency Archbishop Tesfasselassie Medhin celebrated the closing Mass in the sisters' chapel. It was indeed a solemn occasion to thank the Lord and to invoke the intercession of our Holy Mother Foundress upon the Region, the entire institute, and the whole world. These moments were lived in joy and fraternal, spiritual closeness with all the local convents of the Region.

The sisters joined His Excellency in thanking the Lord for the great work that the Lord has entrusted to them, and for all the blessings given to this Region. The sisters acknowledge it is through God's grace that they were able to accomplish this work during these fifty years. They prayed for all the members of the Region, and all those who assisted them through this fifty-year journey. In particular, the sisters are grateful to those sisters from Italy and the United States, especially the early pioneer sisters, many who already enjoy the bliss of Heaven, who sacrificed so much in assisting to build this new mission fifty years ago. The day ended with a festive lunch and with the traditional coffee ceremony.



The entire Institute acknowledges this remarkable milestone of fifty years of service in Ethiopia. We applaud each of you who continue to serve tirelessly in bringing God's love and mercy to the people you serve, oftentimes through great personal sacrifice. May Saint Lucy's spirit always resonate through your good works and give honor, glory, and praise to God. And the journey continues...

Lu & Gi - Sacred Heart Province, Italy

"Young people, light stars on the path of other young people! "



Taking inspiration from the mandate of the document of the Synod of Youth, "Christus Vivit" (Ch V 33) the *Lu & Gi* outlined four programs for the formation of youth for the year 2019 – 2020.

The first two meetings in January and February were widely attended. The features covered included the joy of meeting together and the ability to listen and make a commitment on the part of the young people. The meetings in Rome and Bari centered on the theme, *"Jesus is the shining star of our journey - the polar star of life, and the point of reference in making personal choices."*

Lucy is a star that lights the stars in the firmament of young people: a duty also given to each of us.

"The life of Saint Lucy has been a continuous turning on the flame of Jesus' love, in the hearts of many young people to make it shine with joy in everyday life. Like Lucy, each of us can be and bring the light of love, service, hospitality, forgiveness, understanding, the gift of self, and trust to others. It is important that Saint Lucy guides our steps on the road of light so we may be shining beacons among our friends who sometimes flounder in the dark ... We must share the light that Lucy has kindled among us..."

Unfortunately, the pandemic broke out at the end of February, and the planned program needed to be revised and implemented differently. This did not hamper the enthusiasm and love of the young people for Saint Lucy Filippini. Instead, it gave them wings to exercise their creativity.

Thus was born the narration of the history and spirituality of the Saint, the "Via Luciae" divided into ten paintings. It was transmitted online on May 12, 2020, on the occasion of the liturgical feast of the Holy Teacher.



Through the readings of Gospel passages, points for reflection and invocations, the young people who participated on the internet link, acted as guides in the *sanctuary* of Lucy's life. They contemplated her birth, childhood, and adolescence in the beautiful town of Tarquinia; her youth and

Continued

mature age lived and consumed in the apostolic ardor in Montefiascone and Rome; her kneeling kindly near the little ones, standing beside the young, supporting the poor, the least rejected by society, and strongly affirmed the dignity of woman, spouse, and mother. How obvious that their hearts were warmed by love and admiration for Saint Lucy, even amid glitches in the use of unfamiliar technology!

Mater Divinae Gratiae Vice Province – Brazil

The Vice Province and Each Local Community Celebrates the Feast of Saint Lucy Filippini Despite the COVID-19 Pandemic!

COVID-19 pandemic did not deprive the sisters of the Vice Province of Mater Divinae Gratiae from celebrating the Feast of Saint Lucy Filippini. Although the schools remained closed, the online celebrations throughout the Filippini Community missions of Brazil kept her feast day and mission very alive and animated. These are just glimpses of some of what the sisters were able to accomplish with the technology.

- ❖ The **College Saint Lucy Filippini, São Paulo** together with the Vice-Provincial House celebrated a *"Week in honor of Saint Lucy Filippini"* live stream, each day carrying a different aspect of Saint Lucy's life and every day praying for all the needs that humanity is experiencing with the COVID-19.



- ❖ The sisters of the **Vice-Province** joined in prayer and adoration begging for mercy from the Lord in this difficult moment. They also sought to be close to the people through social media to encourage them through the Word of God and with messages of hope.



Sr. Maria Moreira De Souza

- ❖ The educational community of the **College Our Lady of Divine Providence, Peruíbe, SP**, and parishioners, too, celebrated the triduum in honor of Saint Lucy, followed by the solemn Eucharistic celebration online, via Facebook, in the Parish of Saint John Baptist for which Saint Lucy is co-patroness.



Community in Peruíbe, San Paolo

- ❖ The **College Saint Lucy Filippini of Vilhena**, State of Rondonia, honored our beloved Foundress via Facebook and Instagram. They also prepared a video highlighting the most significant moments of Saint Lucy's life.

Sr. Fatima Melo



- ❖ In Barra Mansa, Rio de Janeiro, on the actual day of the feast, organized a procession by car carrying the image of Saint Lucy throughout the streets of the village. Mass was celebrated online, via Facebook. The people leaned out of their windows and joined the leaders' prayers.



- ❖ The parish community, **Juiz de Fora, State of Minas Gerais** honored Saint Lucy by praying the novena via Facebook. The theme of the novena was: *"We Live the Loves of Saint Lucy: the Word of God, the Eucharist, Prayer, the Poor, and Needy!"*



Mass and a procession through the town followed. At the same time, they collected food for the poor and for those who lost their jobs during the pandemic. The Parish also celebrated the Eucharistic Liturgy on June 22, via Facebook, in commemoration of the 90 years of the canonization of Saint Lucy Filippini.

- ❖ In **Divinópolis, MG**, and **Sorocaba, SP**, the feast of Saint Lucy was celebrated with faith and joy.



Sister Sindu Padamadan, MPF Wins Third Place in Diocesan Contest

Our Lady of Grace, patron of the Diocese of Kannur, Kerala, India, dedicates the month of May in their patron's honor. To increase devotion and to heighten knowledge of Our Lady of Grace more creatively, especially during this time of pandemic, the Diocese conducted a competition inviting all the religious congregations serving in the Diocese to participate. Sister Sindu Padamadan, MPF, took on the challenge to take part in the competition. We congratulate Sister Sindu for partaking in this endeavor, but also acknowledge that she won

third place for her contribution. These are the aspects of Mary that Sister Sindu developed in her presentation:

Mary the Mother of the Whole of Humanity; The Angel Gabriel Greets Mary; Mary, Our Spiritual Mother; Mary, Mother of Mercy and Refuge of Sinners; Mary, Mother of Those Who Suffer; Mary Heavenly Vessel; Mary, the Mother of all Graces.

Sister Sindu reminds us in her concluding lines, *“Mary walks with us on our life’s journey. May we be protected under her mantle and also be filled with all the graces that come from her.”*

Mater Misericordiae Region, Asmara, Eritrea

Taking Advantage of the Lockdown

The sisters of the Mater Misericordiae Region attempted to experience the time of quarantine with a positive frame of mind. This is how they describe the experience:

“Even though we recognize and mark COVID-19 and all its consequences a tragedy, we look back and count the opportunities it offered. The days were well organized with Eucharistic Adoration and the Rosary a center part of our daily schedule. We were able to spend more time on household chores and contributed to the cooking and cleaning. We appreciated the extra time to engage in activities of sewing and embroidering.

Among our accomplishments, we were most proud for the opportunity to each sew a new dress for ourselves. Only a lockdown could provide this leisure time! This provided a sense of accomplishment.”



The sisters felt more tranquil and prepared to enter their annual retreat that took place from June 15 through June 20 because they already had the opportunity for additional prayer and quiet. *“Without haste or preoccupation, in an atmosphere of absolute calm, we lived intensely the whole week with God.”* The sisters were very appreciative of their retreat director, who left them with much to contemplate even after their prayer days were completed.

“Renew your covenant with God, and if your relationship with God is broken now is the time to mend this. Be reconciled with God, your sisters, and yourselves. Be watchful that your charism does not die in your time. You are responsible to pass it on others.”

Continued

With restrictions lessening, the sisters are gradually resuming their visits to the sick and the elderly. They are also beginning again the recitation of the Rosary with families who live and work close to the convent.

Sisters of Volto Santo Accept the Challenge...

Sister Virginia Iamele, Provincial Superior, invited the sisters of the Sacred Heart Province to respond to three questions regarding the effects of the pandemic in their personal lives. Sister Maddelena Quintili, superior of Volto Santo, collated the sisters' responses and forwarded them to Sister Virginia. Upon receiving them, Sister Virginia, grateful and moved, sent the responses to her entire Province. You will find only a small sampling from each question, extracted from their responses. However, these samples reflect the responses of the whole.

What is my coronavirus experience?

- It is a long Lent: in silence, in isolation, with sacrifice and prayers. I beg the Lord to make me understand my responsibilities and the need to repair anything that lessens my love of Christ.
- It is an awareness that the Lord allows suffering to derive good.
- It is providing the time for the most attentive listening and most intense prayer.
- With peace I am practicing patience and resignation.
- I made the decision to live today. God provides for tomorrow.

What am I learning? How have I changed since this event?

- The trials of the Lord urge me to look inside myself with particular interest, to understand what I need to improve and remove.
- To accept everything from His Fatherly hands.
- To welcome the Will of God, thinking that everything is for our own good.
- To celebrate and live the Eucharist with more enthusiasm.
- To be satisfied with what I have, because everything is gift, and I need to be more appreciative of these gifts.

How does the future look for me? For us?

- I don't know what God wants from me or from all of us. I am available to accept with Divine help, whatever God asks today.
- The future is in God's hands. I accept with confidence what He presents to me moment by moment. I believe, however, that it is important to be vigilant, and to live each day for the glory of God and the salvation of humanity.
- I don't know what the Lord has in mind. In the meantime, I want to be more attentive to listening to His Word and to act out of love.
- The future is what the Lord has prepared for me. I would like that when I am called by God, I will be able to say promptly, "Here I am!"
- I am not afraid of the future, but I want more courage. I look at it as an opportunity.

A Lent and Easter Like None Other!

Reflections from Villa Walsh, Province of Saint Lucy

It was Ash Wednesday, February 26, and all seemed well: We had our ashes, symbol of our mortality, plus hope of Resurrection. Alas, slowly, bit by bit, the centuries-old symbols, traditions, sacramentals were put on hold indefinitely: no holy water, no handshake of peace, no sharing from the Sacred Cup; then social distancing six feet away. On Palm Sunday, no Filippini choir chanted, *“The children of Jerusalem...”* There were no palm-waving processions ...because for the first time in centuries, we had no blessed palms. No Liturgy booklets, no Easter fire, nor carving of the Christ Candle, no blessing of the abundant table of food...and yet...the stark reality was there. *“We were reminded that our ‘giving up for Lent’ this year was less symbolic and more real than our past little sacrifices and deprivations, as we called them.”* David Marcus The greater sacrifice was: “This year we gave up the physical presence of each other. Just when our churches should have been fullest, they sat quiet and empty. Like Saint Thomas, we had to do a lot of believing without seeing... If we feel sorry... well, so did our Mournful Mother at the Cross. ...Isolation was imposed, not sought. But we pray, and we know that God will bring good out of it. Remember ...the most horrendous act in human history is today called *“Good Friday.”* ... *“Our Churches were empty ...but so was the tomb!”* Kristi Bothur



General Chapter Study 2019-2020



Each entity has submitted the results of the General Chapter Study 2019-2020, the Acts of the General Chapter. The leadership in each entity is commended for the outline you provided for this study and for the final work that you submitted from your area. Although the study is complete, the work of the Chapter is on-going throughout these six years. We don't lay it aside. May the inspiring reflections shared in your reports be actualized in each of our daily lives. Only then, does the study carry its worth. Let it be our compass moving forward.



“This, Too, Shall Pass”

As the pandemic lingers, we are faced with a force unlike anything we have witnessed in our lifetimes. We have seen the world shrink as we watch the daunting virus spread, and feel the isolation and limitations on freedoms we have always known. Many of us continue to feel powerless as COVID-19 threatens the health of so many unsuspecting souls...

... As women religious, we need to emerge from this pandemic more empathetic than ever to the all too common reality of loneliness. There is a purpose behind this dark cloud that can bring new life to the people of God among us. Let us be moved into action as we recall John 10:10, “I (Christ) came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.” Let us make sure that no one falls short of that abundance while in our midst.

As the Feast of Pentecost approaches, may we recognize in our daily reality, the “life” that burns within. The Spirit is that Paraclete who quietly works in and through us in the basic activities of our daily lives and in the lives of those around us. The feast of Pentecost celebrates the unseen, immeasurable presence of God in our lives and in the Church, calling us to transformation, so that we may bring His life and love to our broken world. God “breathes” His Spirit into our souls that we may live in His life and love; God ignites the “fire” of His Spirit within our hearts and minds that we may seek God in all things in order to realize the coming of His reign. Pentecost is the perfect time to ask the Holy Spirit to rekindle in us the spirit of new life and enthusiasm, the fire of God's love. We are being asked to ponder, “How has this pandemic transformed me?” May the “Flames of the Spirit” consume the evils of COVID-19!

*Excerpts from a reflection written by
Sister Patricia Pompa, MPF, Provincial Superior, Province of Saint Lucy*

