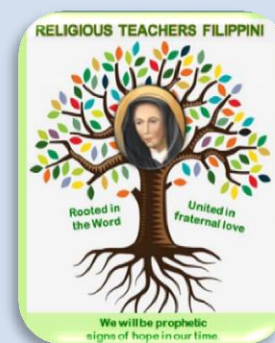


Pontifical Institute of the Religious Teachers Filippini

Communicating...

No. 6

***Generalate
October - December 2020***



Dear Sisters,

This issue of the bulletin allows me the opportunity to thank you for the many kind and thoughtful greetings you extended to me during the Christmas Season. The days of this Season were filled with the joy of your phone calls, warm greeting cards, messages and thoughtful gift remembrances. These were reminders that during this season of Christmas, although we are separated by distance, and this year with numerous pandemic restrictions, we continued to remain closely united. I sincerely thank you for these holiday gestures of affection.

It is not only your thoughts of me that brought us together, but more importantly your deep concern for our sisters around the world. I realize these days have created anxiety for you in so many situations. Each entity of the Institute has had their share of challenges. Our sisters of Ethiopia have been living in great fright for months due to the war in their country. They continue to live in fear because the country yet remains unsettled. In Eritrea, the sisters have to continuously be on guard. Even the silence brings them anxiety because they never know what may be brewing in the minds of their leaders. Due to the pandemic, many of our sisters who are involved in our schools have been challenged to use alternate means of instruction in their classes. However, their learning new technology although demanding, allowed instruction to continue and students were not left behind in their studies. In Albania, Italy, the United States, and Brazil our sisters have been stricken with some very serious COVID hardships. In the midst of this, your prayers, concern and empathy have been strengthening and healing for those who suffered this. Your expressions of concern for one another are a soothing balm. From my place here in Rome, I grasp the intensity of your concern and love for one another. These are the forces that bind us together.

May love always unite us on our journey, love that flows from God's love for us that was again made manifest this Christmas Season.

Sincerely in the Lord,

Sister Ascenza Tizzano, MPF

Sister Ascenza Tizzano, MPF
Superior General

In the name of the Sisters of the Institute, Christmas and birthday greetings were sent to the Holy Father. Accompanying our greetings was a substantial donation for Pope Francis' works of charity. Below are excerpts of the letter of acknowledgement received from the Vatican.

December 30, 2020

Dear Rev. Mother General,

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, welcomed the cordial wishes addressed to him on the occasion of Christmas and his 84th birthday, together with the generous offering for use of his works of charity ...

I can assure you that the generous donation has been providential, because the terrible Pandemic has dramatically increased the number of new poor who turn to the Pope in their needs through this Apostolic Almsgiving...

His Holiness, who gives thanks warmly for the thoughtful act of tribute, exhorts us to welcome God made man in the frailty of a child, so that each day may be filled with his eternal love and, while inviting us to bring the announcement of the Angel who repeats to every man "Do not be afraid," heartily imparts the Apostolic Blessing, which he gladly extends to the Sisters and loved ones, with the wish that the Lord will grant joy and peace

Feast of the Presentation of Mary **Montefiascone - November 21, 2020**

"Bishop Sebastiano Pompilio Bonaventura placed the schools under the sublime protection of the Queen of Virgins, the great Mother of God, so that the Maestre might regard her as their special patroness and advocate and give her distinct homage. As a commemorative and appropriate day to honor her with particular devotion, he chose the feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Temple." (Instruction Chap. I, 6). On this day, Mary was initiated to the service of the Temple among the virgins, who offered themselves to the service of the Shrine in Jerusalem.

With warm sentiments of devotion, the sisters in the community of Montefiascone gathered in front of the image of Mary, so dear to Saint Lucy, and renewed their life's offering. They confirmed their Oblation, together with our sisters all over the world. What makes this impressionable? It is their first time using the formula of the Pontifical Institute!



His Excellency, Most Rev. Lino Fumagalli, Bishop of Viterbo, presided at this special celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy. He paternally addressed the community on this special occasion. In his homily, he contemplated the journey of Mary's life. He stressed how Mary, in total surrender of oneself, accomplished her faithfulness to God's call. The Bishop reminded the sisters, *"God looks upon each of you as well. God chose you solely out of love, and consecrated you to proclaim the Gospel, in the footsteps of your Holy Teacher."*



Bishop Fumagalli – Saint Lucy Chapel
Montefiascone

Sacred Heart Province – Italy

We see light... at the end of the tunnel!

The pandemic demanded a very high price from the Community of Rome -Via Sangemini (Monte Mario), the home for our retired sisters: the death of Sister Carmela Boccapiandola, their caregiver of many years; the hospitalization of Sister Marsilia Di Gasbarro, and Sister Raffaella Trezza; the remaining sisters of the house diagnosed positive with COVID; their Superior, Sister Margherita Damiano, although home, very ill. At the same time, other sorrows pursued: the passing of Sister Antonietta Di Caro alone in the hospital, although not from COVID, and the death of some sisters' family members. Unfortunately, no one was able to visit, to minister, nor offer words of comfort to all those in need of companionship.

Let's listen to the testimony of Sister Marsilia Di Gasbarro who captures the optimistic side of this experience.



"In the first days, we were in a state of total loss. The most helpful and significant people in our community were the most affected. No one in the house was available to provide for our most urgent nor just ordinary needs."

The Provincial Superior, Sister Virginia Iamele, in the name of the Community of the Province, our wider Family, provided us with providential help with the fraternal presence of Sister Silvia Di Barnaba and Maria Angela Vetere. From that moment on, with their assistance and support, they cared for all of us in quarantine and everything improved.

Day by day, we anxiously awaited news about the sick sisters in the hospital, especially Sister Carmela who was the most compromised, and it became less reassuring. Her death left us in deepest sorrow.



Sister Silvia & Maria Angela

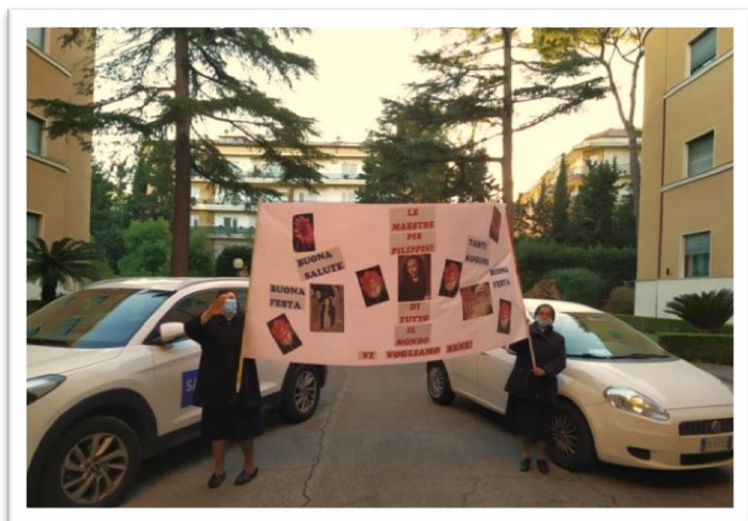
We understood, then more than ever, all that Sister Carmela was for our community. So fragile, she was the white fairy, bent over the bed of pain of any sister in need. We understood her hardships; we recognized her efficiency and willingness to treat and relieve our pain.

Suffering, we asked ourselves what message the Lord wanted to give us. We intensified our prayer, we offered our suffering, we followed the voice of Pope Francis who called every Christian to consider how useless many ambitions are, how fleeting are the possessions and illusory comforts ... and conversely, how necessary to tend to things above, to dedicate oneself to others, to be close to the sick, the poor, the marginalized ...

A more conscious faith and a stronger hope resulted. The availability for fraternal help had grown within us; we have valued the sense of "being close," of belonging to the community, to the whole Institute, to the great human family ...

So much good was done for us through the solidarity of our sisters who from the various houses reached out and showed us affection, interest, closeness... They encouraged us with their promise of prayers; they fueled our trust and comforted those of us who had lost a loved one due to the virus.

Mother General and the Councilors came to greet us in a very pleasant and original way. Standing in the courtyard with a large banner they offered us their wishes for healing, and greeted us for a length of time through our framed windows. It was a touching moment. Thank you, Mother General, thank you sisters!



As a sign of solidarity with the Municipality of Rome, another exciting moment was the "Ovidio" State Middle School, those we host in our building. One morning, pupils, teachers, collaborators and parents lined up along the courtyard, creating a magical effect. They greeted us with affection, provided music to make us feel their closeness and expressed their appreciation knowing they were welcome guests in our home.

We are grateful to everyone who reached out to us and prayed for our recovery.



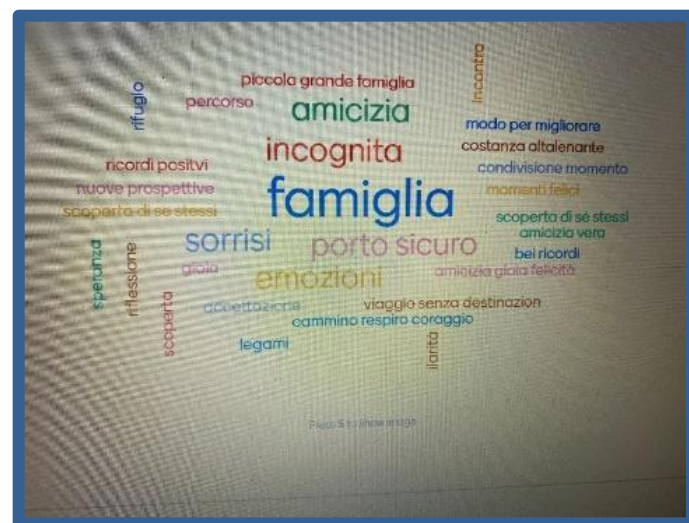
LU&GI

“Leaving to Begin Again”

“Leaving to Begin Again,” was the topic of reflection that the young people of Lu & Gi addressed in their Virtual Meeting. *“Our group is peace, serenity, smile and, above all, family.”* These are the sentiments expressed by the participants.

“The virtual meeting began with a song by E. Ramazzotti centered on “the journey, the path.” The song helped us retrace our journey together, since we experienced unexpected changes of direction due to COVID restrictions. While listening, we noted the words or phrases that most attracted our attention. We asked ourselves some questions: “What does Lu & Gi represent for you?” The resulting words were: family, home, joy, sharing.

*It is **home** because Lu & Gi welcomed us when no one held out their arms. It brings a **smile** for the moments of pure **joy** spent together. It is **sharing** thoughts and experiences. It is **family** because we feel bound by fraternal affection. We know that whatever happens, it is enough to turn around to see someone behind us, ready to help us and to walk again with us. In our groups, we shared what we missed the most and, above all, what we decide for the restart.*



What we lacked was precisely being together physically, exchanging thoughts and ideas, and also sharing moments of reflection and prayer. We missed the monthly adoration, the formation meeting, and even simply enjoying pizza altogether on Saturday nights. We prefer our meeting place, rather than meeting on Zoom and viewing from a screen.

We want to commit ourselves to rebuilding a caring group, to participate constantly in the life of Lu & Gi, not only locally, but also nationally.

We have firmly decided to continue together, taking each other by the hand and promised to begin again, this time overcoming our obstacles.

Saint Lucy Province - USA

Virtual Community Day - November 21, 2020



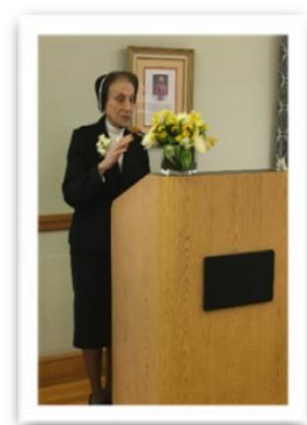
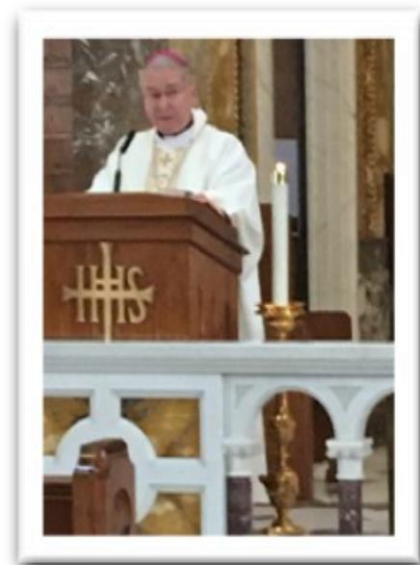
The celebration of the Presentation of Mary in the Temple began with a Prayer Service viewed from the Saint Lucy Chapel. The context of the service praised God for the gift of vocation and for our life in common, lived in the midst of the amazing gifts of creation. The Sisters from each local convent gathered virtually to enjoy this sacred time together.

In her opening address, Sister Patricia Pompa, Provincial Superior, offered these sentiments: *“Looking to Lucy Filippini, we are called to be people of immeasurable love for Christ, which will lead to our ongoing transformation... We must be grounded in this radical calling, so needed in today’s world. Today, in this communal celebration, let us praise and thank God for the gift of our vocation.”*

After the prayer service a moving PowerPoint commemoration of the eight Sisters of the Saint Lucy Province who have gone home to the Lord this year was presented in their memory.

Another highpoint in the planning of the Community Day was the sharing of inspiring and memorable vocation stories. The sisters who volunteered to share their story included: Sister Angelica Cristiani, Sister Barbara O’Kane, Sister Helen Sanchez, Sister Jeanette De Sena, Sister Dorothy Sayers and Sister Gina Piazza.

Eucharistic Liturgy with Bishop Emeritus Arthur Serratelli, the celebrant and homilist followed. He noted in his homily: *“Happiness is not found in any place or thing, but in the person of Jesus Christ and in the purpose of doing God’s will. We need to surrender ourselves to the Lord and gradually God’s will is revealed to us. Like Mary, who offered her life in the Temple, the Sisters on their profession day, voiced “Here I am...” Religious must renew their consecration without compromise or conforming to the world. As consecrated religious, your lives are invaluable...”*



Sister Patricia concluded the virtual gathering with warm greetings for the coming holiday and gratitude for the day’s blessings. The Villa Walsh community gathered for a festive dinner and honored Sister Jeanette De Sena on her 75th anniversary of investiture at this time.

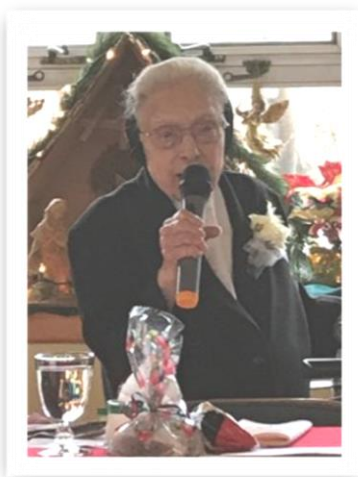
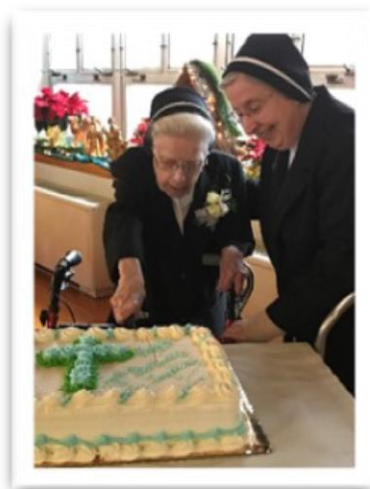
A Centenarian Milestone Sister Josephine Ferrecchia

Christmas Day 2020 was marked with added jubilation as Sister Josephine Ferrecchia celebrated her 100th birthday. The day began with a memorable Eucharistic Liturgy offered by Bishop Emeritus Arthur Serratelli. At the conclusion of the Liturgy, Bishop Serratelli offered an Episcopal blessing to Sister Josephine, coupled with personal greetings, and a photo taken with the centenarian.



A celebratory dinner followed with Sister Josephine enjoying this time sitting at table with the Provincial and Councilors surrounded by the Villa Walsh community. During the festive meal, Sister Josephine and the Sisters enjoyed a heartwarming video of birthday greetings forwarded by Sister Josephine's family members.

Following these shared birthday wishes was a poignant PowerPoint created by Sister Alice Ivanyo, Superior of Villa Walsh, expressing appreciation for Sister Josephine's faith-filled and passionate journey. Included were a variety of photos capturing glimpses of Sister's past and concluding with wintery scenes of Villa Walsh where Sister Josephine lived most of her religious life.



As the day's events came to a close, Sister Josephine, in her own unique style, offered personal sentiments of gratitude and words of wisdom. May the Holy Family accompany Sister Josephine with a holy joy in celebration of her 100 years of life and of her generous service of 90 years as a Maestra Pia.



Two weeks after this special celebration, Sister Josephine Ferrecchia passed away unexpectedly. Sister Josephine will be remembered for her many contributions to the community, but especially in the field of music where she excelled as a composer and director. What a legacy she leaves behind of a life well lived and celebrated to its very end!

Mater Divinae Gratiae, Vice-Province - San Paulo, SP

Celebrating Christmas During a Pandemic



College of Saint Lucy Filippini, San Paulo, SP

The College of Saint Lucy Filippini, San Paulo, SP, organized the *Christmas Solidarity*, again this year, but due to the pandemic it was coordinated differently. To compensate for the nostalgia created by the pandemic, a ***Drive Tour*** took place on Via Dr. Vaz do Amaral, where the Kindergarten is located. The sisters, teachers, coordinators and collaborators invited the parents to approach the school by car so

they could have direct contact with the children and students. The children spent brief moments of joy and emotion meeting the sisters and teachers. They sang and played while remaining in the car.

The management solicited the generosity of parents for donations of food, toys and clothing. All the goods they collected were distributed in part to the poor children of the "Luciane Project" of Miracatu, SP, and what remained was destined for Father Renato, who, together with the Franciscans, prepared hot food for the homeless, and to Father Julio Lancelot who works among the poor in the city of San Paulo.

The College "Our Lady of Divine Providence," Peruíbe, SP, also promoted a Drive Tour.



College of Our Lady of Divine Providence, Peruíbe, SP



On December 9, 2020, the Luciane Project, Miracatu, San Paulo, arranged a gathering with the children and young people. The children were greeted with music, mime, games and gifts. The event of the day was opened with a prayer of thanks to the Lord for the gift of life and a prayer for all the people suffering due to Covid-19 all over the world. The teachers presented the dance of the statues and invited the participation of the children. Sister Inez, Sister Maria de Lourdes and Sister Yesu Rani reserved space for a reflection on the true meaning of Christmas and conveyed Christmas greetings to families, professors and the collaborators as well as to the children and youth.



Each participant was gifted with a personal hygiene kit, story books to read, and a luncheon treat. Although the gathering was short-lived, they enjoyed the opportunity to be together, to appreciate the ambience, and experience the company of the sisters and their teachers once again.

Christmas Catechesis Dramatized

Again this year, the “Dramatization-Catechesis” of Christmas was carried out, but this time online due to the pandemic. With the difficulties and poverty of many families without resources and work, the theme *"Jesus Is Born in the Countryside"* was framed in the Brazilian landscape and offered them a clearer recalling of the birth of the Savior.

In her welcome, Sister Maria Helena de Carvalho, Vice-Provincial Superior shared: *"... Christmas allows us to remember, meditate, thank and praise the Lord for the many successes achieved in this year 2020. Many difficulties have been overcome by the teachers and coordinators meeting the students through means of technology.*

We are here because Christmas is the time to praise, to wait for the Divine Child who wants to be born in the heart of each of us. Let us welcome Jesus in this very important time in the life of every Christian ... "

Sister Maria Helena grasped the opportunity to thank Sister Fatima and Sister Maria Eunice, coordinators, teachers, parents and students who participated in the wonderful work achieved during a year so different and difficult, one filled with many challenges.

Mater Boni Consilii, Region - Ethiopia *News Received ... What a Miracle!*

It seemed a real miracle to Mother General, Sister Ascenza Tizzano, to hear Sister Freweini Weldu's voice at the phone. Sister Freweini Weldu, the Regional Superior of the Mater Boni Consilii Region, Ethiopia, providentially found a ride from Adigrat in an ambulance directed toward Mekele where the Sisters, Daughters of Charity reside. She willingly embarked on such a risky journey because this was her only means to communicate with the Generalate, and reassure the sisters in the Institute, who were very worried about them, that they were alive and safe. The frequency with which she repeatedly said, "Thank God, we are alive!" expressed the drama of their experience.



Sister Freweini explained that in Adigrat, both the house and the school windows were severely damaged by the explosions. The school in Zalambessa also suffered considerable damage, and important items were stolen, eg. the photocopier.

The sisters of Zalambessa very frightened, walked for kilometers on dirt and bumpy roads, until they reached our house in Saassi. Currently, the main concern in Adigrat and everywhere is the thefts that are taking place.

The electricity which was interrupted at the beginning of the war three months ago is now restored, but the internet connection still inactive, she reported.

Another major problem is that the banks are closed. The communities cannot receive money, and what is available is running out. So far they have used the food supplies stored at home, but even those are starting to run short. Fortunately, they receive a certain amount of grain which is helping them considerably, and the water from the wells (the wells we had financed in the past) have been very useful.

Sister Freweini attributes their safety to the prayers of the entire Institute; she thanks everyone in the name of all the sisters and asks continued prayers for them, in this moment of fear, suffering, doubt and suspicion.



The information received is brief, but moves us to be confident and grateful in the Lord. We are more serene, and together we continue to feel united in prayer.

Queen of Peace Region - India

Advent Wreath Blessing in Munagalapalli

In India, the devotion of the lighting of the Advent candles is usually done only in the parish churches and religious houses. This year Sister Pramila and Community in Munagalapalli of the Queen of Peace Region, India, took a special initiative to spread this devotion to the families of the village to encourage a spiritual preparation among the people for Christmas.

The Sisters and the Postulants made the candles and prepared the wreath for each family. The children were instructed beforehand by the sisters. On the first Sunday of Advent children came joyfully and with much eagerness to the parish ready to bring the Advent wreath to their homes and to



prepare themselves to receive Baby Jesus, the Prince of Peace in their hearts and in their families



During the Holy Mass, the children came forward in procession with the Advent wreath in hand and the parish priest, Father Vijay CSSR, blessed the wreath and sent them out two by two. The people who gathered for the Holy Mass were filled with joy seeing their children receiving an Advent wreath for their homes. The parents were inspired to light the Advent candles in their homes with great devotion and to prepare themselves for the celebration of the birth of Jesus at Christmas.

Auxilium Christianorum – Via Missori *Under New Management*

To close a mission is a very difficult, painful decision for any Administration. Both in the Province of the Sacred Heart and in the Province of Saint Lucy such choices have been necessary. In moving forward, these judgments unfortunately will continue, oftentimes due to our declining personnel.

For sometime the General Council has had very serious concerns regarding "Auxilium Christianorum" our pensione, Rome-Via Missori. The activity of the "Auxilium Christianorum" was started to support the missionary works of the Institute. The ardor and the dedication of so many sisters through the years have contributed their utmost energy to this mission. The pensione, however, has had some difficult times, but especially during this pandemic. In the midst of our grave concerns, we were surprisingly approached by a friend who manages a hotel company, one who is aware of our charism and has assisted us in the past in this same capacity. He asked if we would consider leasing the building to them, promising to maintain our spirit and charism, especially that of catering to families with children. After prayerful consideration, the General Council honored his request. This decision will allow us a continual flow of funds to maintain the support of our missions.

You can continue to recommend the facilities at Missori, even though it is under a different name and a new management. If approached, you could also recommend tourists to our pensione, S. Lucia Filippini, Largo S. Lucia Filippini, 2000186 Rome, tel. 06 67 91612 - 06 67 90 139, e-mail: mpfgin-nasi@virgilio.it

We pray always, *"Let me know your ways, Lord, teach me your paths"* (Ps 25: 4)

