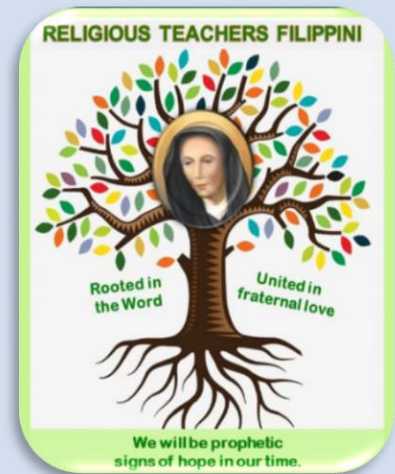


***Pontifical Institute***  
***Religious Teachers Filippini***  
***Communicating... No. 18***  
***Generalate***  
***October – December 2023***



Dear Sisters,

What a delightful opportunity for me to greet you before the close of this Christmas Season of 2023, and to extend well wishes on the brink of a new year, 2024! Because many warm greetings have been shared among us worldwide during this season, I would be remiss if I didn't begin with an expression of deep gratitude. Thank you for remembering me and the sisters at the Generalate. These special times of year create a closer bond, we are one family united in Christ, welcoming the renewed presence of Emmanuel in our hearts and lives. From all parts of the world in unison, we echo and re-echo this holy chant "The Savior is born, Christ the Lord! God is among us!"

Amid the Christmas splendor, however, today we suffer the dense darkness of two major wars, numerous civil wars, and minute hidden wars that are shaking our world and our lives. What a contrast from the guiding principles offered in our "Fratelli Tutti" study that offers the means that could avoid all wars. Regrettably, greed, hatred, power, etc. have become the victors.

Sisters, I offer you a New Year's challenge. Can you each make striving for peace your year's goal and passion? "*Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me!*" Can you dedicate this New Year to promoting, striving, and praying for peace? Can you be an advocate for peace, peace within your own heart and home, in your place of mission, and globally, too? Can you share this *peace passion*, by encouraging, and inviting others to practice and pray for peace in the world with you? Become a bearer of peace in 2024, and make peace this year's passion!

May Emmanuel, Prince of Peace, dwell in your hearts this coming New Year.

Sincerely in the Lord,

*Sister Ascenza Tizzano, MPF*

Sister Ascenza Tizzano, MPF

*General Superior*

**Lord God of peace, hear my prayer!**

**Now, Lord, come to our aid! Grant us peace, teach us peace; guide our steps in the way of peace. Open our eyes and our hearts, and give us the courage to say: "Never again war! Instill in our hearts the courage to take concrete steps to achieve peace. Amen.**

*Excerpts from the Peace Prayer of Pope Francis*



## Mater Christi Region - England

### Christmas Blessings

In the woods of southeast England, in the little village of Medstead, three visitors arrived from Rome on Monday, December 11, 2023. What a joy to welcome Mother General, Sister Ascenza Tizzano, Sister Mary Elizabeth, and Sister Mercy! Their arrival initiated a festive celebration and an early Christmas! The lighted wreath on the large green front door, the fresh holly-laden Advent table, the Christmas decor throughout the house, the boiling teakettle, and the spiced “sweets” spoke of the excitement and happiness of the anxious sisters who had been awaiting this visit!

The days to follow were filled and fleeting, but most enjoyable! Sister Mary Mancham and Sister Jyothi Pasala sang a most cordial welcome with lovable expressions of song and dance. We prayed, ate, sang Christmas carols, shared stories and gifts, and experienced “*Emmanuel*” in our hearts and actions. Our guests Christ-like witness and presence among us brought “the gift of peace and the joy of Christmas.”

Mother General and her Councillors were introduced and met with significant people who are part



of the Sisters’ lives. Among them were the headmistress of Single Steps Nursery, Ophea Waite Uden, and her husband Joel. (Our Nursery School was leased to Ophea, the Director, three years ago.) During their visit, Ophea explained her detailed curriculum and shared their growth story that began with two teachers and five children. Now, it has grown to ten teachers and fifty children, and a waiting list is filled for 2025!



Mother General and sisters were invited to a pre-performance of their Nativity play by the children, ages ranging from two to five years old! We felt our guests were impressed! Mother General was also able to experience first-hand Sister Mary Mancham’s participation in this dynamic program and the joy she brings caring for these children.



Mornings after the Lauds, Mother General led the sisters in a reflective Advent meditation, which focused on preparation for the glory and beauty of that first holy night.

When Mother General and guests departed on the morning of Friday, December 15, 2023, our hearts were filled with gratitude, for we had received many Christmas Blessings through this special visit!



*Mother General, Sister Mary Elizabeth Lloyd and Sister Mercy want to express their deepest gratitude for the hospitality extended to us during this memorable visit. Sister Barbara Ranere and each sister could not have done more to make us experience Christmas joy. The spirit of Emmanuel filled their home and filled our hearts. You were our Christmas blessing! Thank you!*

**Sacred Heart Province, Italy**  
**Community Day Sponsored by the General Council**  
**Via Trevignano Romano, Rome**

Mother General cordially invited the sisters of the Sacred Heart Province, Italy, to celebrate the annual Community Day that is sponsored by the General Council on Saturday, November 18, 2023, at Via Trevignano Romano.

The participation of the Sisters who came from the various houses was numerous and very lively, an army of bold soldiers, no longer very young, but still full of enthusiasm and excited to be together again.

Mother General, Sister Ascenza Tizzano, with the General Council delightfully and diligently prepared the meeting. With the presence of the Provincial Superior, Sister Virginia Iamele, her Council, and the sisters, it was a day filled with emotion, surprises, and profound interest and pride. The presence of Don Marco Del Canuto, pastor of Santa Margherita Cathedral of Montefiascone, made everything more solemn and full of meaning.



The day was marked by moments of prayer and reflection, animated by Don Marco and the General Council, interrupted by breaks where the sisters not only enjoyed the snacks prepared by the host community of Via





Trevignano Romano, but it was their opportunity and joy to interact with each other. The main feature of the day was viewing the new documentary "*The Light Still Shines*." Part One of the documentary richly explains and illustrates the life and work of our Holy Mother Foundress, Saint Lucy Filippini, with filial reference to the guidance of Venerable Cardinal Mark Antony Barbarigo. What to say? It was a time of pure enjoyment of the spirit!

The verbal portrayal was accompanied by the most beautiful images of Saint Lucy and her apostolic life. Even though everyone was familiar with the various details, the documentary brought these descriptions back to life and they spoke so eloquently. The heroic deeds of the little and great Lucy were notable and filled the sisters with filial pride.



Part two of the documentary captures the beautification and canonization of Saint Lucy and briefly introduces our Mission countries. Testaments of Sisters from various parts of the world share the call of their vocation, and in what way their desire to give themselves to the Lord grew. Many confided that in their life choice, they were attracted by the Figures and Works of Saint Lucy Filippini.

Thus emerged the virtues that distinguished our Foundress:

- her firm conviction of faith and attitude of abandonment, which allowed her to overcome the numerous trials of her life;
- the spirit of sacrifice and attention towards the weakest;
- her unconditional dedication to others, from children to adults, and also to fallen women;
- filial devotion to the Virgin Mary.

The central moment of the day was the celebration of the Eucharist, presided by Don Marco. Anticipating the feast of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary in the Temple, the sisters also reaffirmed their Oblation together as a Province.



In his homily, Don Marco underlined the words of Saint Augustine, sharing that Our Lady was great not so much for having been the Mother of the Savior, but for having been His Disciple...: and this is what our Foundress achieved.

The screening of the third part of the Documentary took place after the liturgy. This last showing highlighted the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration that took place in Italy. Concluding the day, Mother General encouraged the sisters to be authentic witnesses of Lucy's sanctity by imitating her virtues. She stressed that we must continue to be a beacon of light just as witnessed in the film. This then assures that Saint Lucy's light will continue to shine.



### **“Unless you become like Children...” – Montefiascone**

It was a great surprise and grateful emotion for the Provincial Superior, Sister Virginia Iamele, who received a special letter from two children from Montefiascone: *Children really can teach us adults so much ...!*

In a previous visit to the school in Montefiascone, Sister Virginia shared her missionary experience in Ethiopia-Eritrea. Flavia and Giulia, two little sisters, were particularly impressed. That story, imprinted in their young minds, stimulated

them to start a generous initiative in favor of our missions, an activity that also involved their parents and grandparents, the entire family.



During this Christmas Season at the time when the Church of San Flaviano, Montefiascone, presented its Christmas program, with the assistance of their family elders these young girls prepared a table filled with Christmas items for sale. The proceeds from this sale were sent to Sister Virginia to help our missions. This initiative makes us reflect on how we touch the hearts of children and the influence they can have on their families. In our mission, let us never tire in our efforts to encourage the formation of Christian Catholic families.





## Pilgrimage to Volto Santo

Once again, this year, Sister Virginia Iamele, Provincial Superior, invited the sisters of the Sacred Heart Province to gather for an overnight at the Provincial house to fulfill their desire and need to celebrate a small part of the Christmas Season together. The light schedule included spiritual enrichment that was provided by Father Bruno Sperandini, a former student of the Maestre Pie, the Liturgy of the Hours and Liturgy, and blocks of time to share, enjoy, and visit the Christmas sights at Saint Peter Square. Yes, it did include a



night of tombola and added treats that followed! An obvious feeling of warmth emanated in this leisure setting.

In Father Bruno's morning session, he capitalized on two words, *fragility* and *vulnerability*. He offered insights into how we react to our fragility and how God reacts to this. He stressed that we study the crucifix where fragility is most notable. From this concept, Father moved forward



ward to the theme of vulnerability, brokenness, and being hurt. Again, the Christ that we follow was also vulnerable, and it was his vulnerability that saved us.

Father Bruno allowed for a long period of silence for each sister to reflect personally on the essence of being vulnerable and how this affects us individually, and if they were at the stable at Jesus' birth, which character could we most relate to, from the stance of our vulnerability? He concluded the session by inviting the sisters to freely share their reflections. Liturgy followed and offered the occasion to further participate in the prayer and songs of this season.



This year Sister Virginia replaced the usual pilgrimage to a Marian shrine and instead planned a pilgrimage to Volto Santo to pray, sing together, and enjoy the company of our

Maestre who are ill. What an unforgettable gathering! Those sisters who were able came to the Chapel where together the Maestre prayed and sang before the beautiful chapel Crib. Then together, specially prepared refreshments were enjoyed by everyone, through the warm hospitality provided by Sister





Anna Macchia, local superior, and Sister Giancarla Bincoletto, assistant superior. Once again song naturally became part of this gathering.

After this time together, the sisters freely went to visit the sisters in their rooms who were unable to join the group. The sisters do not have many opportunities to get to Volto Santo because they live so distant from one another, and rarely travel to Rome. This pilgrimage satisfied both the residents of Volto Santo and even more the sisters who visited on pilgrimage. In summary, this experience united the Province even more closely to those who are our most fragile and vulnerable members.



## **Saint Lucy Province, USA November Community Day**

The Sisters of Saint Lucy Province gathered in Saint Lucy Chapel on November 18, 2023, to celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of Mary. The morning began with a



welcome by Sister Patricia Pompa, Provincial Superior, who reminded the Sisters: *“We look to Mary’s life of faith and draw inspiration from her. The witness of Mary’s life readies us to give of ourselves wholeheartedly to a life of ongoing transformation.”*

In her announcements, Sister Patricia recalled with gratitude the celebratory events of the last several months. The Sisters were reminded that during the height of the pandemic, the four Sisters who died, Sister Henrietta Aprile, Sister Josephine Ferrecchia, Sister Frances Stavallo and Sister Viola Alu, had gravesite burials since group gatherings were not permitted. Sister Patricia announced that on Saturday, April 6, 2024, a Memorial Mass will



be held in Saint Lucy Chapel to honor the memory of these four Sisters. The Community and family members of these sisters will be invited.



The sisters viewed an inspiring video highlighting Horatio Spafford, whose life was marked by sorrows and tragedy. He wrote the words to the song, “*All Is Well With My Soul*” as a result of the tragedies he endured. His 4-year-old son died of scarlet fever, and his 4 young daughters drowned at sea while traveling from the USA to Europe. We all experience life that is unpredictable and challenging, but with trust and faith in God, we, too, can say, “*All is well with my soul.*”

The morning continued with a reflective tribute to our deceased Sisters of the past year: Sister Gloria Barone, Sister Genevieve Corallo, Sister Mary Rotante, Sister Gloria Doria, Sister Annette D’Antonio and Sister Ann Marie Mecca. This beautiful tribute was prepared by Sister Elizabeth Dalessio and narrated by Sister Elizabeth Toft.



The Eucharistic Liturgy was celebrated by Monsignor Thomas Caserta. In addition to reaffirming the Oblation during the liturgy, the Golden Jubilee of Sister Joan DiRienzo was commemorated.



In his homily, Monsignor noted that “*Each Filippini Sister is called by name as the fruit of Jesus’ prayer and conversation in the Trinity. We were called, not because of our talents and experience, but because we are precious in God’s eyes. The “yes” of each sister was an answer to an eternal call, and is a tangible event that shows a single-mindedness and purity of heart. This “yes” is a profound example to the Church.*”

As the pastor of Saint Bernadette’s Parish in Brooklyn, New York, for 15 years, Monsignor stated that he witnessed Sister Joan’s dedication to the school and parish, and whose vocation brought light and hope to others. He continued by saying, “*We have set our hands to the plow and never looked back. We stand on the shoulders of our holy Sisters who have gone before us.*”

Following the Liturgy, a festive dinner took place in the dining room where the sisters and members of Sister Joan’s family gathered. A congratulatory letter from Sister Ascenza Tizzano, General Superior, was read expressing well wishes to our Golden Jubiliarian and the community at large. A tribute honoring Sister Joan’s 50 years of service was prepared by Sister Elizabeth Dalessio and Sister Helen Sanchez.

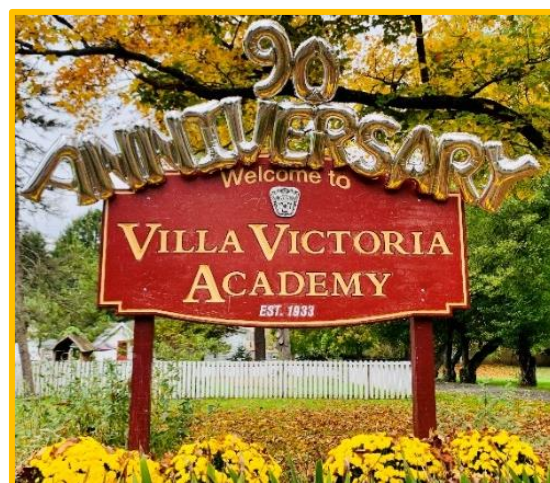




Closing remarks of gratitude and updates on the Sisters were made by Sister Patricia Pompa. The gift of this day was memorable and joy-filled!

## Villa Victoria Celebrating 9 Decades of Faith and Excellence!

Villa Victoria Academy celebrated 90 years of faith, academic achievement, and sisterhood during an anniversary celebration on Saturday, October 21, 2023, at the school's Ewing campus. Bishop David M. O'Connell, C.M., was the main celebrant for the Liturgy held in the school theater for the Religious Teachers Filippini and the extended Villa Victoria school community.



*“What a great joy it is for me as your Bishop to celebrate with you the 90th anniversary of Villa Victoria, a beacon of light in our diocese. I am so happy and congratulate all of the Sisters Filippini who have worked so hard over the years to make such a wonderful school, and all of your teachers and students who are here and part of this celebration.”*



Concelebrant and homilist, Monsignor Thomas Gervasio, diocesan Vicar General and Pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Anthony Parish, Hamilton, New Jersey, reflected on the anniversary of the school and the Religious Teachers Filippini. *“Villa’s life has been infused with a confident faith, a reliance on God’s Providence and continual turning to the Lord asking, seeking, knocking so that VVA would meet the challenges of the day.”* Monsignor shared excerpts from Saint Lucy’s personal letters, which detailed the challenges she faced with establishing and maintaining the schools. *“Two hundred ninety-two years have passed since Saint Lucy wrote those lines, and I’m certain from her glorious place in heaven she rejoices with us today.”*



Following the Mass, Sister Patricia Pompa, Provincial Superior, addressed those in attendance by thanking Bishop O'Connell, and acknowledging the dedication of Sister



Lillian Harrington, who served the Villa community for more than 40 years as teacher, principal and president, and Sister Lesley Draper, who has diligently served as principal since 2010. *“An anniversary celebration of nine decades can only begin with profound gratitude to almighty God,”* Sister Patricia stated. She continued by reflecting on the sisters who traveled to the United States and were tasked with beginning the school almost a century ago.

*“These Sisters were trusting and committed to the charism of Saint Lucy Filippini. Over these past 90 years, our society has changed, but the unwavering mission of Villa Victoria has not.”* The overwhelming love for the Religious Teachers Filippini was prevalent among the graduates as they shared their stories, laughter, and smiles. The celebration continued with refreshments, campus tours provided by students, a photo booth for class reunion photos, and new memories created and shared.



Congratulations to the Villa Victoria Academy Community on this milestone anniversary! May God bless you as you move forward and continue the mission in the spirit of Saint Lucy Filippini.

## Mater Divinae Grazie – Vice Province, Brazil

### Solidarity Visit - San Paulo



by various moments of spirituality, integration, games, fraternity, exchange of experiences, and enjoyed dinner together. The students offered a theatrical presentation, “The Wizard of Oz” and some songs. They brought gifts, toys, and food for the “Luciane” Project children’s families.

On November 23, 2023, the students of the “Santa Lucia Filippini” College of São Paulo visited the poor children and young people of the “Luciane” Project of Miracatu, São Paulo, in anticipation of the Christmas celebrations.

In a spirit of solidarity, the students spent a day marked





Some teachers and Father Renato, coordinator of religion classes in the college were present with the students.

The joyful day, in a fraternal atmosphere, was an opportunity to make the most fortunate people aware of the poverty and suffering experienced by many Brazilian families.



## Mater Boni Consilii Region, Ethiopia The Hope of Peace

*“The Sisters of the Mater Boni Consilii Region, Ethiopia, are so grateful to God for His providence. We experienced God’s goodness through many people during these past three years of war, namely our Institute, our benefactors, and all who shared our sufferings through their prayers, thoughts, and financial help. Thank you very much, and may God reward you with his peace and blessings.”*

For the most part, the situation is improving except for our school, Saints Peter and Paul School in Zalambessa, which was destroyed during the war. These children and the teachers of this school are now accommodated at Saint Lucy School in Adigrat. Since September the schools have been opened and are crowded.





This time the sisters have the opportunity to work more on spiritual retreats as Saint Lucy did in her time as a preparation for Christmas. In December, the sisters arranged a workshop and a recollection day for our teachers.



Another day of prayer and recollection was organized for our Catholic students and aspirants. So much joy was felt by all who came to these spiritual activities.



*“Every day is a gift for us; the past war taught us how much we have to depend on the Providence of God and to be thankful. The outcome of war and conflict destroys everything, morally, psychologically, and financially. Join in our prayer. We hope and pray for a lasting peace.”*





## Queen of Peace Region – India

### Celebration of All Saints Day

November 1st, All Saints Day, is an eagerly awaited day for the new candidates that join the Region. This tradition began with our beloved Sister Maria Alliegro. The sisters in charge of the formation groups, faithfully continue the tradition, Sister Rosey, the candidate formator, and Sister Shiji, the novice formator prepared them for this annual event.

The candidates and the novices were given a brief sketch of the life of a Saint to memorize. On the day of this celebration, they dress as their saint, and the celebration takes place. Represented their saint, the candidates were very excited by seeing the way they each were dressed. The presentation of our dear founders, Saint Lucy



Filippini, and Cardinal Bar-

barigo was most impressive. The celebration concluded with the singing of the Litany of the Saints. This preparation and presentation gives the candidates and novices new inspiration and an ardent desire in their hearts to fall in love with the saints.



### Temporary Oblation

The vigil of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception December 7, 2023, was a day of joy and delight for the Queen of Peace Region, India. Our four Novices; Elizabeth Ekka, Molina Soreng, Birma Lakra and Pikasini Nandasingh, donned their Novice garb and were prepared to receive their Temporary Oblation.

The main Celebrant Father Bala Pachimala, the Vicar General of the Diocese of Eluru, family members of the Novices, priests and religious, friends and well-wishers were given a warm welcome by the Regional Superior Sister Maria Xavier, Sisters and the candidates.

A short introduction was given at the beginning of the Liturgy introducing the novices. Elizabeth, Molina and Birma are from Assam, a Northeast state and Pikasini is the first vocation from the state of Orrisa, a state that witnessed the martyrdom of so many Christians in the recent past, but the blood of the martyrs has strengthened the Catholic faith.





The homily was very inspiring and motivating. Father Bala Pachimala, spoke of the importance of religious in the Church. Quoting Pope Francis, he shared, *“The Religious congregations are like different colors of a picture. They add color and beauty to the Church. Be faithful to the charism of your founders, go back to its roots, and unearth your original charism. To live our Religious Life beautifully we need to consider three factors:*

*“First, Nurture your vocation daily through your prayer life. Eucharist and Scripture should be the center of our life. Secondly, live your vows faithfully. Like Blessed Mother, following Jesus who was poor, chaste and obedient. Remain in love with Jesus. Third, embrace the community joyfully. Your biological family takes the back seat. Now the Maestre Pie Filippini will be your family.”*



In the absence of Mother General, Sister Maria Xavier, Regional Superior, received their Oblation and welcomed them into the Institute of the Religious Teachers Filippini. At the end of the Eucharistic Liturgy, the newly professed sisters were felicitated by cutting the cake, shawling and garlanding. After the celebration, all shared a festive meal.

The message of Mother General, Sister Ascenza Tizzano to the new Junior Professed was very inspiring; *“Congratulations! To-day begins another significant step in your desire to become a Religious Teacher Filippini. You turn the corner and begin a new track in your religious life. To-*



*day, I know your hearts are filled with gratitude, gratitude to God, Our Blessed Mother, and our Founders, Saint Lucy Filippini and Cardinal Barbarigo. Your gratitude should also be extended to Sister Maria Xavier, Sister Shiji, and all those who have brought you to this day. So many have already been involved in your formation.*

*In this Season of Advent and tomorrow when the Church celebrates the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, you are reminded how Mary prepared so attentively for Christ to come into her life. Turn to Mary and implore that this be the main aim during your years ahead, to allow the Lord to grow within you. What a beautiful time in your life to make this beginning step that will lead to your final Profession!*



The Queen of Peace Region congratulates the newly junior professed sisters for their willingness to say “yes” to the call of the Lord, and we accompany them with our prayer that their lives become a blessing for all.



### **Marian Youth Movement**

December 10, 2023, indeed remains a great day in the annals of Saint Lucy Convent, Janampet, as it witnessed the blissful Marian Youth Movement with cherishing smiles and enriching talents of our youth in and around Janampet.



The day began with a Prayer Service beautifully led by Youth from Vanguru Village under the guidance of Sister Gladish Mary.

After the prayer, all marched to the open square in the center of the Regional House, where the youth exhibited their talents. This was witnessed and appreciated by distinguished guests.

The Youth that gathered had the privilege of listening to inspirational words and guidelines for the life they embrace in this challenging society, addressed to them by Rev. Father Chinnu. Pollisetty. OFM Cap, and Sister Mary Therlingi MPF.



How very grateful they were to Sister Maria Xavier, the Regional Superior, who took a special interest in encouraging the youth with her loving and inspirational words and appreciation for their active participation. The celebration concluded with an agape in honor of Sister Maria Alliegro of happy memory and a hymn to Our Blessed Mother.

The Queen of Peace Region is ever grateful to Sister Maria Alliegro, who stands as an inspiration to begin this wonderful event of the Marian Youth Movement. It continues in her memory, and now is led by Sister Mary Therlingi.

