



# Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters

*called by the Spirit • embracing the world*

**PROVINCE BULLETIN**

Vol. 39 No.4 – USA–APRIL 2019

## Encountering Blessings!



Shortly after 5:00 am on Holy Saturday, I was awakened by the phone. Instantly, I knew who was on the other end, “Ciao Dorota, sono Donato!” - a homeless man I befriended while in Rome. For the past seven years, Donato has not failed to greet me for Christmas and Easter with that early morning call. His words flew vibrantly like a river with greetings and asking how I was before saying that the call might end any moment for the Euro 1.50 he was able to spend. The call did end before I answered or ask him anything.

Donato reminds me of the importance of encounter. He was appreciative of the few Euros he received each time he passed by the Generalate. Yet, he was really looking for someone to relate to. I committed myself to share a meal with him once a month and to listen to him. This created a lasting bond. I witnessed ‘Resurrection’ when Donato shifted from being a pathetic victim to owning his choice and accepting help. I saw hope shining when he decided to get an ID and to access federal services. I witnessed the glorious wounds when his diabetic legs started to heal.

Christ is risen! Let us run on the dew-wet grass to the garden! Let us take the road to Emmaus! Let us stay together in the upper room! Let us be astonished in the fatigue of business as usual! Let us be vulnerable for **ENCOUNTER** wherever it might happen!



**Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters: in the United States and in the Caribbean**

Northfield, IL	Grayslake, IL	Epworth, IA	Antigua	New York, NY
Waukegan, IL	Chicago, IL	Memphis, TN	Jamaica	St. Kitts



# AT THE BORDER

Sr. Agathe Bramkamp, SSpS

**B**orders - the word has many meanings and connotations: it suggests limits, demarcation, barriers to cross or not to cross; it may connote protection vs. danger, it may also mean a threshold leading into the neighbor's yard, promising friendly exchange, cooperation, mutual interest and help.

What we hear about borders these days, especially about our "southern border" it has no friendly, neighborly nuances in tone, but mostly raw hostility and policies to match that position.

My recent stay in El Paso, TX, "on the Southern border", was a heartrending experience. I did not cross any border, but met many exhausted and hungry, yet still composed and hopeful mothers with their children as well as fathers with children. They had come to the border after a long and arduous trek knowing full well that they would not receive a welcome, but be put in a detention center, being fitted with "tracking sensors" and then sent to one of the Refugee Centers. Some had been subjected to harsh and even cruel treatment at the border. There could hardly be the real relief of "having made it" to a safer spot and having your children out of life threatening danger.

Coming to the Refugee Centers, where many volunteers offered welcome, gestures of kindness and concern, preparing food, basic clothing, an opportunity to clean up and have a warm bed to rest a night or two, was for many a restorative experience of their humanity. Sr. Maria Joseph Nguyen, who stayed and cared with much circumspection and

quiet service, could tell stories as well of how simple goodness can be a healing gift. The people freely expressed gratitude for the smallest thing offered and let the hope and possibility of life with dignity light up their faces. Some mothers smiled the most beautiful smiles of appreciation for the kindness extended to them and their children.

Our southern borders are in danger of not being a demarcation of national sovereignty, but of battle grounds and places of open hostility against the refugees from deadly aggression in their own countries. Our neglect to seek solutions to the reasons for these desperate and often deadly journeys and our myopic vision of America as the "Land of those I deem fit" is actually part of the sin against our southern neighbors. Building walls are an example of fear and hate. It is ugly, uncivilized, and costs lives while hardening consciences. Pope Francis said this concerning border walls: "Those who build walls will end up being prisoners within the walls they built." (Quoted in NCR, Vo. 55, April 19-May 2, 2019)

# Comings & Goings

On 04/17/2019 - 05/06/2019 Sr. Sesilia S. Anak from the Province of Timor will take part in the UN forum on Indigenous People and stay with the New York community.

On 04/28/2019 - 05/02/2019 the New York community will host Sr. Catherine Ferguson, SNJM who will evaluate Vivat.

By the end of May: we hope to welcome Marie Laurent Casimir from Haiti who was a candidate

with our Sisters for almost a year, first in St. Kitts and more recently in Antigua. She will take summer ESL classes at DWC in Epworth.

As the school year is slowly wrapping up, we will say "Good Bye" to two of our Sisters who became so much part of our lives: Sr. Selvi and Sr. Viera. Please be sure to utilize any opportunity to be enriched by their presence and strengthen the bonds of sisterhood.



## SAVE THE DATE

May 11, 2019  
First Vows:  
Sr. Marie Eunide Voltair

May 26, 2019  
Sr. Monica Zhang, graduation  
from Carthage College, Kenosha

June 15, 2019  
Sr. Angelica Oyarzo Chavol  
graduation from DePaul, Chicago

June 16, 2019  
Jubilees: Trinity Sunday

July 27, 2019  
Junior Sister meeting

August 3 - 4, 2019  
**Province Days:**  
after the retreat at the CHS

## CONGREGATIONAL SERVICE



Sr. Monica Darrichon accepted the request to serve as translator during the 15th General Chapter in 2020.

Sr. Monica Mabel Balbuena was asked to serve as Assistant Treasurer General for three years with possibility of extension. Sr. Monica accepted the challenge and will move to Rome later this year.



## SUMMER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There is still time to volunteer for summer programs:

**May 31, 2019 - June 8, 2019:** Summer Bible School in Mississippi and Arkansas - preparation after Memorial Day (contact Sr. Mary Miller)

**July 8, 2019 - August 2, 2019:** Summer Peace Camp in Rogers Park (contact Sr. Rosa Da Costa Menezes)

**July 1, 2019 - July 26, 2019:** Summer Peace Camp in Wheeling (contact Sr. Rosa Da Costa Menezes)

Parish Mission Appeals: (contact Sr. Mary Miller)



## EASTER REFLECTION

Sr. Dorota Maria Piechaczek, SSpS

Monday of Holy Week, when the news broke that Notre Dame cathedral was engulfed in flames, was an awakening call for me that suffering, hurting, destruction, and death are all around us and cannot be ignored. However, later that week, I came across an article in *The Tablet* (April 17, 2019) in which Rupert Shortt depicts the plight of the ever growing number of Christians living in fear, being killed and exiled, while “the world ignores one of the great moral outrages of our time”. According to the Pew Research Center, Christians are the most oppressed faith group. They are widely targeted in 144 countries – up from 128 just three years ago. During these days of reflection, I considered all fifty countries in which our fellow Sisters are ministering and added some twenty more countries where the SVD-s are present. I thought about the environment within which they minister. It is not only about the safety of the Missionaries but about the people they walk and worship with. It is also about the NEWS the Risen Lord proclaimed: “go and tell my disciples” (Mt 28:9). This clearly calls us to live radically the prophetic dimension of our missionary call, to be willing to suffer for the sake of faithfulness to God’s call.

These thoughts and images did not leave me during the Easter celebrations, in spite of the colorful décor and sweet hymns. Then, I learned about the horrific attacks in Sri Lanka. I prayed for deep faith in the Resurrection, in Christ’s victory over sin and death, in the hope of new life. Having the experience of living under the Communistic regime, and currently in a country where Christianity, and all religious beliefs enjoy freedom and respect, I feel compelled to do all I can on behalf of my suffering Christian Brothers and Sisters. This is my close family! Is it also yours?

May I propose that during these seven weeks of Easter, leading to Pentecost, we walk closely with the global Christian Family? We widen the circle and build communion, as we listen to the stories of the first Christian community and claim the Risen Lord’s presence and power. Let us form a close spiritual community upon which God will rain again the Holy Spirit, empowering new disciples to speak boldly in the languages of today. May a stunned crowd exclaim: “we hear them preaching in our own language about the marvels of God” (Acts 2:11).

## Gratitude and Congratulations



Sr. Angelica Oyarzo Chavol, served as the Executive Director of the Holy Spirit Life Learning Center from September 2016 to March 2019 and its Program Director since the beginnings in 2011. The past three years, were critical for the development of the Center as it incorporated the updated mission of the former Little Mexico in Wheeling. Thank you Sr. Angelica for your visionary and efficient leadership, your sensitivity to those most in need, and the joy you brought to so many Summer Peace Campers!

Congratulations to Sr. Rosa Da Costa Menezes on her nomination as Executive Director of the Holy Spirit Life Learning Center! We wish you, and the Center, success measured in the improvement of people’s life skills.



Congratulations to Yolette Dorce on the defense of her thesis and diploma! Yolette is working on her visa to return to the USA.



# MINISTRY APPOINTMENTS AND TRANSFERS



*Sr. Agathe Bramkamp* from the Convent of the Holy Spirit to Grayslake (Spiritual Directress, Resource Person)

*Sr. Alexis Tjahjani* from Antigua to the Convent of the Holy Spirit (Business Office)

*Sr. Angelica Oyarzo Chavol* from Rogers Park to the Convent of the Holy Spirit (Temporary completing studies and internship)

*Sr. Arnolda Kavanamur* from Antigua to St. Kitts (Pastoral Ministry)

*Sr. Carol Welp* from Epworth to Waukegan (May 2020) (Formation and Spirituality Resource Person)

*Sr. Elsa Castellano* from Epworth to Antigua (January 2020) (Hispanic Ministry)

*Sr. Maria Theresa Nguyen* from Grayslake to Waukegan

*Sr. Marie Eunide Voltaire* from Waukegan to Antigua (Teaching at St. John's Catholic Primary School)

*Sr. Monica Zhang* from Waukegan to Grayslake (Ministry at the HSLLC in Wheeling)

## Book of the MONTH



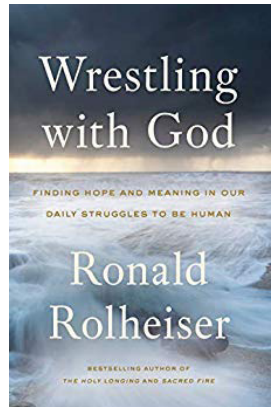
### "Wrestling with God"

#### Finding Hope and Meaning in Our Daily Struggles to Be Human

By: Ronald Rolheiser

In *Wrestling with God*, Ronald Rolheiser offers us a road map to help us in our search for true meaning and faith in our lives. This book was written with three audiences in mind: those who are searching for some kind of faith to live by; those who are searching for ways to meet the challenges of today; and those who wish to deepen their faith in a longing for "Someone" big enough to embrace us fully. Drawing from his own life experience, well known author, Ronald Rohlheiser, helps us find our own rhythm in walking the path which leads to "real faith". Real faith, he says is not a set of answers but rather, it leaves us in mystery, in longing, in desire..."open to something bigger".

Beautifully written, poetic and filled with meaningful applications, *Wrestling with God*, offers invaluable insight into how we might journey in faith, searching for life flourishing with meaning and joy.



- Sister Betty Tranel



We welcome Sr. Monica Mabel, after her home leave in Argentina. Sr. Monica plans to partake in a 30 day retreat and then work on her visa. By the end of summer, we might be saying our good byes.

ARNOLD JANSSEN  
SPIRITUALITY CORNER REFLECTION:

Fr. Carlos Paniagua-Monroy, SVD

*How are we the image and likeness of God in today's reality?*

If we see ourselves as part of history in the making, it is our turn to discover what is the meaning of being the image and likeness of God in our day and age. Considering issues like global migration, global warming, the reality of our church, and issues pertaining to addiction, we could ask: how do we approach our own humanity, in order to show the kingdom of God among us?



The following are books that approach the topic of who a person is in relationship to/with God.

*Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*, Works of Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule express how women view themselves and their relationship to knowledge.

*Multicultural Aspects of Human Behavior: A Guide to Understanding Human Cultural Development*, by Willie V Bryan. Great insight into minorities groups.

*One Hundred Divine Healing Facts*, by T.L. Osborn. How do the scriptures show that God is both savior and healer in Jesus?

*In the School of the Holy Spirit*, by Jacques Philippe. How are we aware of the Holy Spirit in our lives? How to be more attentive to the movements of the Holy Spirit in our life.

*Called to become the Children of God: The Catholic Theology of Human Deification*, Editors Carl E. Olson MTS (Author), Fr. David Vincent Meconi S.J. This is a fascinating book! A little bit on the scholarly side but we can gain a deep insight into humanity.

GOOD FRIDAY WALK FOR JUSTICE

Sr. Rose Therese Nolta, SSpS

Srs. Dorota Maria Piechaczek, Viera Klabnikova, Maria Theresa Nguyen and Rose Therese Nolta participated in the Good Friday Walk for Justice on April 19, 2019 in downtown Chicago. The theme for this year's walk was "Justice: TRUTH in Action" which exemplified how Jesus is suffering, condemned, burdened and struggling today. Here are some pictures of the walk.



Prayer  
Request

*For a spirit of communal discernment during the community leadership nomination process.*

*For our sick Sisters and Sr. Maria Theresa Nguyen's mother.*

*For our deceased:*

*Mrs. Lydia Bruce – Sr. Gertrude Ahegbebu's paternal aunt*

*Mrs. Eileen Burke – Sr. Priscilla Burke's niece*

*Mrs. Dolores Nystrom – Sr. Francetta Kunkel's sister*

*Mr. Anthony Risi – Sr. Marie Angela Risi's brother*



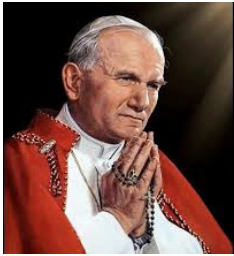
## JPIC Corner – April 2018

### The Earth - “We Walk on Holy Ground”

It’s spring! April is the month where spring really shows its face and helps us to appreciate the beauty of the Earth. *Pope John Paul II said “the aesthetic value of creation cannot be overlooked. Our very contact with nature has a deep restorative power” (World Day of Peace Message, 1990).* April 22 marks the 31st celebration of Earth Day—an effort initiated to increase awareness about nature and environmental issues.



So how did you celebrate Earth Day? If you are like most people, you may struggle to answer. As Catholics, some struggle with “**eco-spirituality**” which has been defined as “a manifestation of the **spiritual** connection between human beings and the environment.” Not many people seem to remember or recognize that our earth is holy ground, a gift that God gave us as caregivers to support and sustain us. We live and work in ways that seem disconnected from the care of the earth, ways that unknowingly or carelessly neglect or misuse this holy ground.



As Catholics and SSpS, we are called to care for God’s creation and the environment. Attitudes toward protecting the earth have changed. Pope John Paul II actually planted some of these seeds. He introduced the “ecological question” and connected it to Catholic social teaching. One of the seven themes in Catholic social teaching in the [Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church](#) (2004) is to **safeguard the environment**. You should also note that, “**Communion with Creation**”, is a directive in the SSpS congregational directions. “**We need to grow in the awareness that all creation and life are interconnected and reflect the love of the Triune God.**”



This awareness for care for creation continued with Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who succeeded Pope John Paul II. Pope Benedict highlighted environmental justice in many of his talks and public appearances and earned the label of “**the Green Pope**”.

Here’s an excerpt from Pope Benedict XVI’s 2010 World Day of Peace address. These and other writings from Pope Benedict clarified that care for creation was a matter of morality and that good stewardship of the earth is important to uphold human dignity.



*“The Church has a responsibility towards creation, and she considers it her duty to exercise that responsibility in public life, in order to protect earth, water and air as gifts of God the Creator meant for everyone, and above all to save mankind from the danger of self-destruction.”*

*(Pope Benedict XVI)*



The current Pope, Pope Francis, has taken this awareness even further when he launched his encyclical on the environment, “**Laudato Si**”, an encyclical on climate and justice to “enter into dialogue with all people about our common home.” Perhaps the most important focus of the encyclical is the relationship between global poverty, catastrophic inequality, and worship of consumerism that leads to environmental destruction. He asks that we all help.

*I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all. [...] We require a new and universal solidarity. [...] All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents. (excerpt from Pope Francis introduction of Laudato Si')*

How can we as SSpS communities help? Please select two of the following ideas below or add some of your own ideas/suggestions for the province to do as actions that we can all support. Email your responses to the Justice and Peace office. Here are some ways:

1. Use cloth bags in place of plastic bags.
2. Use reusable food wraps in place of plastic wrap.
3. Use cotton alternatives ‘un sponges’ in place of synthetic sponges
4. Use bamboo toothbrushes in places of plastic toothbrushes
5. Use bamboo utensils (for on the go) in place of plastic utensils
6. Use glass straws in place of plastic straws

### Climate Blessing

**We Hold the Earth.**

**We hold brothers and sisters who suffer from storms and droughts intensified by climate change.**

**We hold all species that suffer.**

**We hold world leaders delegated to make decisions for life.**

**We pray that the web of life may be mended through courageous actions to limit carbon emissions.**

**We pray for right actions for adaptation and mitigation to help our already suffering earth community.**

**We pray that love and wisdom might inspire my actions and our actions as communities. . . so that we may, with integrity, look into the eyes of brothers and sisters and all beings and truthfully say, we are doing our part to care for them and the future of the children.**

**May love transform us and our world with new steps toward life. (Interfaith Power and Light)**



**By Sr. Rose Therese, SSpS & Lori Brayer**



# JUSTICE CONFERENCE OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS (JCWR) ON “RACISM”

Sr. Rose Therese Nolta, SSpS



I traveled to St. Louis, MO for a gathering of Justice Conference of Women Religious (JCWR) from March 25, 2019 – March 27, 2019. The important topic for the third convocation was “Racism through the Prism of Social Justice.” Srs. Patricia Chappell and Anne-Louise Nadeau, SNDdeN from Pax Christi invited participants to examine the roots of systemic racism and explore the difficult work of purging ourselves, our communities, and our country of the sin of racism and its destructive effects. Four workshops provided different perspectives. I attended the following workshops: “How to be White Allies” with the main speakers and “White Privilege: What do I do with it?” with Marcelline Koch, OP.

For me it was a deeper realization that racism is apparent in all aspects of life and that our failure to end it is social sin. I am a part of the white privilege, and it is important for me to know what I should do with it. For me to be even more aware of the ways that racism is still at work in our society today is essential if I/we want to address it.

The symbol used for our conference was “SANKOFA”, which means we need to look back in order to move forward. This symbol is by the Akan people of Ghana. It symbolizes that we need to look back to be aware of racism in our lives.

There is much we can do and should do against racism in ourselves, our communities and in our country. If you have a chance, please read: Open Wide our Hearts: the Enduring Call to Love, a pastoral letter against racism from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, November, 2018 at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/upload/open-wide-our-hearts.pdf> More information about racism will be sent via e-mail.



Photo from the (JCWR) conference on “Racism”.



Photo from a presentation at the (JCWR) conference.