



Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters

called by the Spirit • embracing the world

PROVINCE BULLETIN

Vol. 39 No.3 – USA – MARCH 2019

Moment of Clarity!



When I glanced at our community bulletin board, intending to post the Convocation Letter for the 15th General Chapter, I was flabbergasted. My first thought was, 'yet another one'. Somehow, the physical lack of space on the board measured my receptive capacity. This sinister thought, for a moment, tried to steal the overarching excitement of being a part of something much bigger. Then, I imagined that at the same time, the very same letter is being shared with some three thousand Sisters all over the world. My thoughts and my heart were broadening. I became overwhelmed by a sense of harmony around this important event in the life of our Congregation! The preparatory work, the theme, the many discussions, and the prayers that are invitations to become immersed together in the context of our mission: to view the world using a unique common lens and to listen anew to the cries of those around us. God is assuring us of being the God of the living, ever present among us. These thoughts caused me to wander with Jesus' disciples, but on another road in which a woman touched his cloak and got healed. I prayed that each of us reaches for the hem of Jesus' cloak and extends God's compassion and love to every person who is crying for help. How we do it, in practical terms, is for us to discover and Infinitely More ...



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

OUR REFLECTION OF THE CONFERENCE ON STATUS OF WOMEN 63

Sr. Barbara Miensopust, SSpS & Sr. Skolastika Wea, SSpS

What a blessing it has been to be in New York City and attend the Conference on the Status of Women of the United Nations. From all over the world, women speaking different languages, wearing beautiful attire, bringing their cultures and their stories. Nine thousand people registered for this event, people who bring the voice of millions of women and girls from around the world. They are the voice for those women who govern their countries, but also the voice of the most vulnerable women. Coming from Jamaica I carry the women and girls whom I know, and the stories which I have heard; stories of girls who are raped on the way to school or coming back, stories of domestic violence where they look for shelters, stories of single mothers who struggle to get food for their children, stories of sexual abuse, stories of girls sent by family for prostitution. I ask myself how these two weeks can help me in my ministry.

So sad to hear that in so many places in the world these basic human needs are not accessible. This conference opened my eyes to see much more, opened my ears to hear the voice of millions of women and girls. I am so grateful to the province for the invitation for this conference, also to Sr. Helen who introduced us to this program and accompanied us during this time. Thank you to the New York Community for your hospitality.

Sr. Barbara Miensopust, SSpS

I am grateful for the opportunity to attend the Sixty-Third Session of the Commission on the Status of women at the United Nations in New York. I was moved by the many stories and various experiences of women from different countries who shared their success and challenges in their everyday life. They had great enthusiasm in coming together to empower, advocate and fight for better treatment of women and girls around the world especially those who are still left behind in the society. These empowered women and girls articulated the idea that men should have rights and nothing more, and women should have rights and nothing less. Men and women are equally competent and should be able to enjoy equal rights and equal power.

Throughout this event, I realized that most people are still living in the culture of silence and ignorance. Many victims do not have access, nor the opportunity, to raise their voice, tell their stories and fight for their human rights. I may not listen or be aware that there is a woman or a girl that is crying out for help in the silence and having no confidence to share their wounds and hurts. As in the gospel (Mark 12:31), “The second most important commandment is this: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself.” I challenge myself to have an openness of heart to pray for our broken world; to listen to the needs of my fellow wounded neighbors and to do a small action for them according to my capacity. This invitation is not only for me but for all of us who call ourselves a follower of Christ.

Sr. Skolastika Wea, SSpS



SSpS Sisters Barbara Miensopust, Ancy Jacob, Gladys Paul, Helen Saldanha, and Skolastika Wea at CSW63, New York.

Comings & Goings



Sr. Gladys Paul from Mexico arrived on March 7, 2019 in New York for a 3-month sabbatical. Welcome Sr. Gladys! We wish you a fruitful & renewing time with us.

Sr. Maria Joseph Nguyen left for El Paso on March 12, 2019 to volunteer among the refugees there for one month. Thank you for representing us in this critical ministry. Sr. Agathe Bramkamp left for El Paso on March 26, 2019.

Sr. Rebecca Chaan David left on March 21, 2019 for vacation in Uganda. Wishing you a good time with family and praying for peace in South Sudan.

Novice Theresa Kim decided not to seek admission for First Vows and left on March 21, 2019. We will miss you Theresa. You are a fine young woman with great potential. We accompany you in our prayers.

Srs. Selvi Selvaraj and Dorota M. Piechaczek will travel to Sao Paulo, Brazil and participate in a PANAM meeting April 26, 2019 – May 5, 2019.

Sr. Judy Vallimont, Sr. Monica M. Balbuena, and Mr. Mark Kelly are representatives for the dedication of the new school in Jamaica. Some benefactors among them from St. Norbert's Parish in Northbrook are considering attending as well.

HOLY SPIRIT LIFE LEARNING CENTER LENTEN RETREAT 2019

Sr. Rosa Da Costa, SSpS

The season of Lent is a time of great opportunity for our Holy Spirit Life Learning Center to offer a retreat to the women and men who desire to experience God's mercy in a special way on their journey of life. On Saturday, March 9, seventeen adult women and men came to our Center in Rogers Park to participate in a day of retreat that was led by Sr. Lidia Kunze, SSpS under the theme "Tras los Pasos de Jesus en su Camino hacia la Pascua (Following the Steps of Jesus on His Path toward Easter). The retreat, which was in Spanish, began in the morning starting with self-introduction and sharing by the participants about their hopes and expectations of the retreat. Sr. Lidia helped and guided them in three sections which were prayer, reflection and sharing.



Participants of the HSLLC 2019 Lenten Retreat.

During the season of Lent, we prepare to celebrate the Paschal Mystery; the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ at Easter. This was the main focus of their meditation in the morning. After dinner, the participants were encouraged again to reflect on the meaning of Lent and its invitation to us as Christians. The biblical passage that supported this reflection was Luke 4:1-13, which explains Jesus being guided by the Spirit into the desert where He experienced various temptations.

The participants were very happy and their enthusiasm was evident in their sharing. At the end of the retreat which was 3:00 pm, each participant wrote their own evaluation. Most of them were immensely grateful for this retreat because this was a time to grow deeper and stronger in their faith, to be more penitent and to embrace their spiritual journey.

"Lent is the season to reflect upon the radical message of the Gospels, and the light of Christ for which we long."



Small group photo after the class.

UISG formation program for formators began officially on February 4, 2019 in Rome. A brief explanation about the vision and goal of the UISG formation program was shared then Sr. Carmen Sammut, MSOLA the President of UISG, welcomed all 33 participants from 25 countries. Sr. Patricia Murray, IBVM the Secretary executive of UISG welcomed us as well and gave us a brief history of the UISG. This formation program is taking place in the Regina Mundi building which is part of the UISG where various activities for women religious are being conducted.

Sr. Patricia Murray gave a brief history of this program which used to take place but had ceased since 2006 until this year. After over 10 years, the UISG felt the great need of forming and providing some tools to formators in order to support the ministry by preparing some members from different Congregations with valuable training and preparation in order to accompany the newcomers with the reality of the present world.



Group photo with Miss Frances Henry after 3 days of "Group Building/Dynamics."

Sr. Cynthia Reyes, SRA the UISG formation program coordinator together with Ms. Claudia Giampietro, the secretary of UISG invited each participant to introduce themselves with a symbol that represents their purpose, expectations and their commitment to the program.

The program officially opened with the Eucharistic celebration led by Archbishop Jose Rodriguez Carballo, Secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic life. In his Homily he addressed us with the message of Pope Francis's reflection during an interview with Fr. Fernando Prado, CMF on consecrated life today entitled "The Strength of Vocation." He emphasized some significant points that strengthen our lives as religious, which include:

1. The Person of Jesus: The person of Jesus is everything in religious life and only He is the strength of our life. Everything comes from our encounter with Him.
2. Communion with the Holy People of God: The Pope speaks more of the church as the people of God. It has consequences for formation. This is important for better serving the people of the God, avoiding clericalism.
3. Charism, Mission and Prophecy: The Pope Stresses Charism as a way of avoiding functionalism. Charism is much more than what it does. Its mission is to be witnesses, to be prophetically

moving toward existential peripheries and thoughts.

4. Procedures: Procedures of renewal, formation of transformation and mission. The Pope tells us to always go forward with the Lord, doing all that He tells us.

5. Method: Making discernment a way of life; see, judge, act and a preferential option for the poor. Discernment which is not just the way, but a necessity in order to proceed toward the right direction.

6. Fruitfulness: This comes from encountering Christ and encountering our Sisters and Brothers from whatever communities they come from.

The input of these courses are so rich, in not only theory and the knowledge given but also well balanced with concrete everyday training experience, and time is set for personal integration every Friday. The program is helping us to appreciate the diversity of different nationalities and Congregations hence forming new relationships and new interconnection amongst each other by our daily encounters and sharing different experiences.



Sr. Rosalia Galmin & Sr. Malgorzata Lech.

IN MEMORIAM

Sr. Martha Fass, SSpS
(June 23, 1929 - March 7, 2019)



On March 7, 2019 surrounded by members of the community as well as the nursing staff at the Convent of the Holy Spirit, our dear Sister Martha Fass answered the call of the Lord to be with Him in everlasting paradise. At the time of her death Sr. Martha was three months short of her 90th birthday, and had been a vowed member of the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters for 60 years.

Sr. Martha was born in June of 1929 to parents Matthias and Anna Maria Brittner in Waldrach Germany. She was one of four children, and grew up in a household filled with love. Sr. Martha was received into the novitiate on December 8, 1956 and pronounced her first vows in 1958.

Sr. Martha received her mission appointment to the U.S.A. in 1961 and upon arrival spent a great number of years as a nurse as well as a driver. She spent a lot of time attending to the needs of those in hospitals who were sick and infirm. Sr. Martha visited her family whenever possible and enjoyed a love for horses. Dear Sr. Martha, we will remember your beautiful smile and caring ways. Please remember us all before God's throne.



SAVE THE DATE

April 29, 2019
Dedication of the new
classrooms in Jamaica

May 11, 2019
1st Vows:
Sr. Marie Eunide Voltair

Province Retreats:
May 20 - 24, 2019
Bordentown, NJ

July 28 - August 2, 2019
Convent of the Holy Spirit

June 16, 2019
Jubilees, *Trinity Sunday*

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

NEWS



On March 3, 2019, The Convent of the Holy Spirit welcomed the Misericordia "HeartBreakers". Christopher, the honorary President of Misericordia, while praying after lunch, reminded us to be faithful to our Lenten resolutions and not only give up stuff but give of ourselves. What followed was a perfect example of what it means to give of yourself wholeheartedly. The seven pairs of the dancing group, gave an amazing performance. They danced, smiled, were attuned to the music and to the directions of their instructors, all while having fun. Thank you for the jubilant entertainment and for "being a friend to me" for many years, as the first song was entitled.

LCWR REGION 8 MEETING

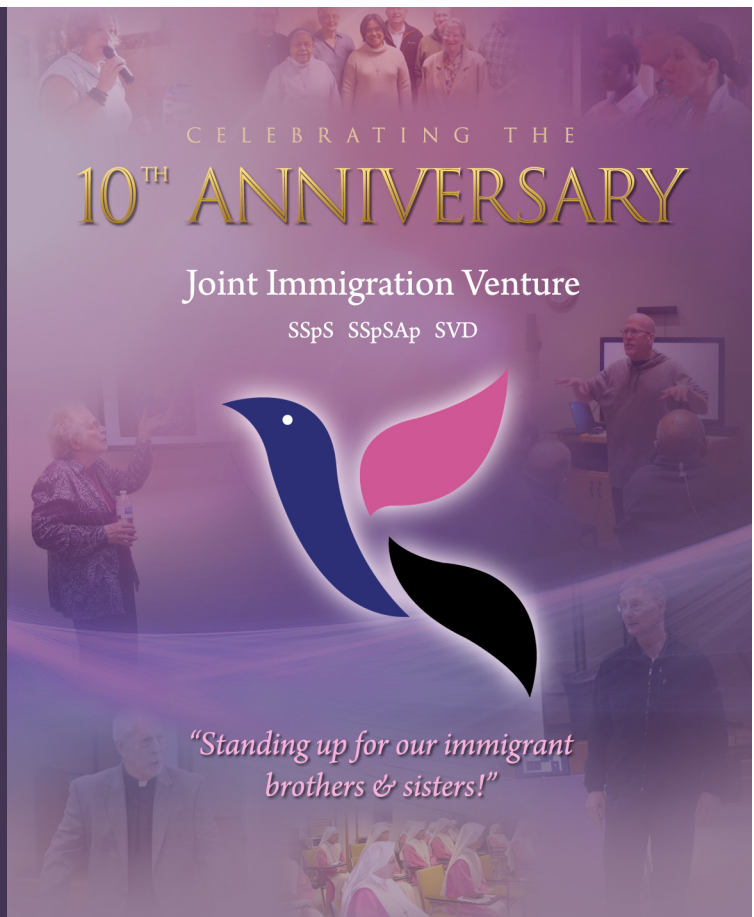
Sr. Elwira Dziuk, SSpS

On Wednesday, March 20, 2019, SSpSSrs. Dorota Maria Piechaczek and Elwira Dziuk visited Springfield, IL to participate in the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) Region 8 meeting. The Hospital Sisters of St. Francis hosted the group of about 30 leaders across Illinois this year. As new members, we were invited to take part in the Project IRENE orientation meeting with Sr. Rose Mary Meyer, BVM. After lunch we met in the Chiara Center to engage in dialogue with others on some regional business and preparation for advocacy at the State capitol. The next morning, we arrived at the capitol to advocate on behalf of Fair Tax for Illinois and for Immigrant Services Line Item Restoration that would provide funding for underserved emerging communities, for rapid response to immigration enforcement and for legal representation. Unfortunately, we were not able to meet our new Senator Laura Fine nor our Representative Robyn Gabel. However, at the capitol we listened to a speech presented by Governor JB Pritzker (IL) in appreciation of women in celebration of International Women's Day, which took place this month. The Governor presented awards to women who contributed their services in support of women in need. During the event, we also engaged in dialogue on social justice and on the emergent planning process. As part of the afternoon festivities, three Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, from their General Leadership Team from Poland, Germany and Japan, were invited to share the situation of religious life in their respective countries. For many this was an eye opening experience. As part of the process, we elected a new Vice Chair and Treasurer, set the next meeting dates, and evaluated the meeting. We concluded with a farewell prayer service, blessing especially those who are going to vacate their leadership positions after many years of service. It was been a blessing for the two of us to participate in this meeting and connect with other leaders from our region.

JOINT IMMIGRATION VENTURE CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF SERVICE

Sr. Rose Therese Nolta, SSpS

The Society of the Divine Word, our Adoration Sisters and the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters created the Joint Immigration Venture (JIV) to work on immigration issues in 2009. It has been ten years since the beginning of this venture and on March 9th the organizing team (Brian McLaughlin, SVD; Mike Decker, SVD; Sam Cunningham, SVD; Sr. Carol Welp, SSpS, Sr. Aprilia Untarto, SSpS, and Sr. Rose Therese Nolta, SSpS along with Mrs. Lori Brayer) had our most recent planning meeting. We had made a prayer card, a new brochure, a facebook picture and a JIV logo along with tablecloth for the week's events. Several presentations at various locations, explained the happenings and progress of JIV over these ten years. Presentations on knowing your rights, immigration issues, etc., were given while concluding with time together in celebrating all that we accomplished together. Now, we are energized with God's help to continue to pray, advocate, educate and act for our brother and sister immigrants. Thank God and all of you for your support of the JIV.





MINISTRY APPOINTMENTS



Sr. Rebecca Chaan David received mission mandated for our Province. We are happy to have you join in the mission of the Paraclete Province. In September 2019, she will travel to the Philippines in order to take part in the Tertianship program.

Sr. Veronica Kim from Korea, who was in our Province for language studies in the 90s, received 3-year appointment for Cross Cultural Mission Experience in our Province. She plans to arrive in the fall.



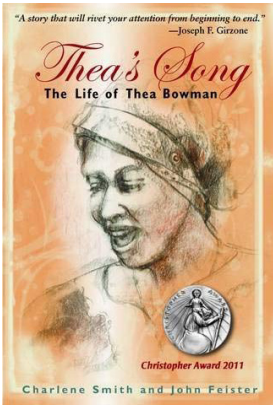
Book of the MONTH



"THEA'S SONG"

The Life of Thea Bowman

By: Charlene Smith and John Feister



Sister Thea Bowman gained world renown as a scholar, singer and speaker, promoting intercultural awareness throughout the country. Born a black girl in 1937, she grew up in the small town of Canton, Mississippi, converted to Catholicism at the age of ten and later joined the Franciscan Sisters in Wisconsin. "THEA'S SONG" tells an inspiring and joyful story of how Thea, through her gifts of music and speaking, dealt with racism and prejudice bringing joy and hope to the many people she encountered. She died at the age of 52 after having struggled for several years with cancer. This book will capture your attention from beginning to end and challenge you to be instruments of God's peace and love. For many of us Holy Spirit Sisters, "THEA'S SONG", is very touching since we knew her and worked alongside her while we were ministering in Mississippi.

A Lenten Prayer

Gracious Father,

May this time of fasting and reflection bring us ever closer together in love, so that we may not only share in the grace you provide, but also become more aware of the sacrifice of the precious life of your son, that brought salvation to sinners who now trust in his Holy Name. Grant us this request we humbly ask in Jesus' name, Amen.



JPIC Corner – March 2018

International Women’s Day or United Nations Day for Women’s Rights and International Peace



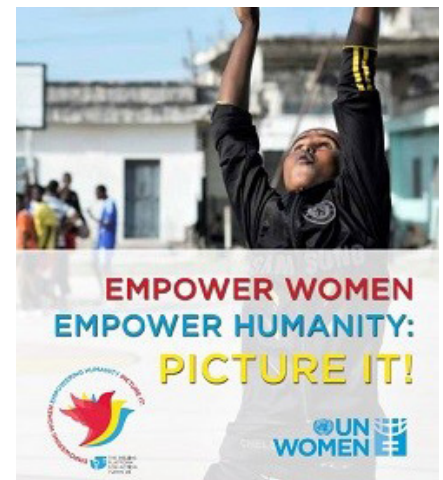
This month, JPIC corner will turn its focus to International Women’s Day (IWD). It is also known as the **United Nations Day for Women’s Rights and International Peace**. It celebrates the political, social, and cultural achievements of women. International Women’s Day, which is observed annually on March 8, is gaining recognition as an important worldwide celebration. Given the strides that women have achieved in recent years in empowerment, the day is worth celebrating. This

day of celebration acknowledges gender equality and the participation of women and ministries of support for women. For SSpS, women’s ministries have been a long held priority. No single institution—for example, a corporation, charity, women’s network, academic institution or nongovernmental organization (NGO) — is entirely responsible for the day. This day is a collective call for gender equality and an opportunity for reflection and advocacy, and is a call to action for bringing about gender parity.

The United Nations has defined International Women’s Day as: **“A time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities.”**

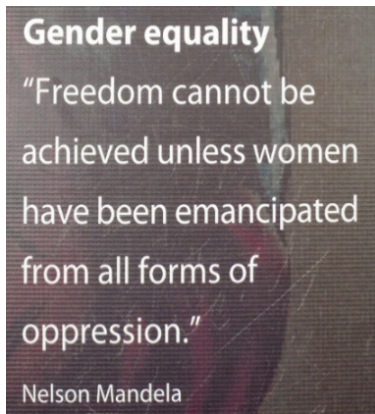
What has the UN done for women’s rights? Quite a lot. A number of key agreements were created and help guide governments and advocates in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. **The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bill of rights for women. It consists of a preamble and 30 articles. It defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. By accepting the Convention, countries commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms. Important to note, of the 194 U.N. member nations, 187 countries have ratified CEDAW. The **United States** is among seven countries that have not -- along with the Pacific island nations of **Tonga and Palua; Iran, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.**

Another pivotal agreement is the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for Equality, Development and Peace (BPfA)**, adopted in 1995. It was adopted by 189 member nations, including the U.S. This agreement reaffirms the fundamental principle where the human rights of women and the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The UN website shares, **“The Platform for Action imagines a world where each woman and girl can exercise her freedoms and choices, and realize all her rights, such as to live free from violence, to go to school, to participate in decisions and to earn equal pay for equal work.”** The Platform for Action includes commitments under 12 critical areas of concern. These commitments have endured and serve as a source of guidance.



Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!

Luke 1:45



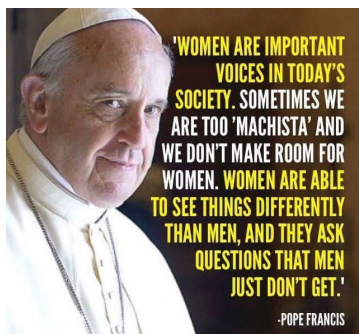
Another important aspect of the UN Women’s program is the [Commission on the Status of Women](#) (CSW). This is the principal global intergovernmental body dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. [This organization is “instrumental in promoting women’s rights, documenting the reality of women’s lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.”](#) (UN website). CSW take a leading role in monitoring the progress and implementation of the Platform for Action.

This Commission has an annual two-week session at the UN headquarters in New York. The 2019 theme was “Think equal, build smart, innovate for change” which focused on innovative ways to advance gender equality and empowerment for women.

At this year’s conference, **the Vatican** sent its first ever representative to the assembly. Barbara Jatta, the first-ever female president of the Vatican Museums, represented the Vatican. “I’m personally honored, but I think it’s an important symbol that the Holy See wished to send about the presence of women in its structures.”



Vatican flag outside UN in NY



Hundreds of experts from different fields and backgrounds attended the event. The CSW is one of the commissions of the UN that does not limit participation to states only. For example, **NGOs (Non-governmental organizations)** are also allowed to participate in sessions of the CSW, attending caucuses and panels and organizing their own parallel events through the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, NY. **VIVAT International** is one of those NGO’s that participates and does advocacy work at the UN. This is a great opportunity for partnership with others in the world who contribute to the same goals.



A Prayer for International Women’s Day:

God of all, God of hope,
We pray for women and girls today
That they will be all they can be.
Give us courage to speak and work
For equality and justice
Until the earth is filled
With righteousness and love.
Amen.
(Church of England)

By Sr. Rose Therese, SSpS & Lori Brayer