



SSpS MISSION

Called by the Spirit • Embracing the World

Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters | USA & Caribbean | NOVEMBER 2020

Advent

Welcoming

Hope

Joy

Peace

Love



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Focus on Mission...

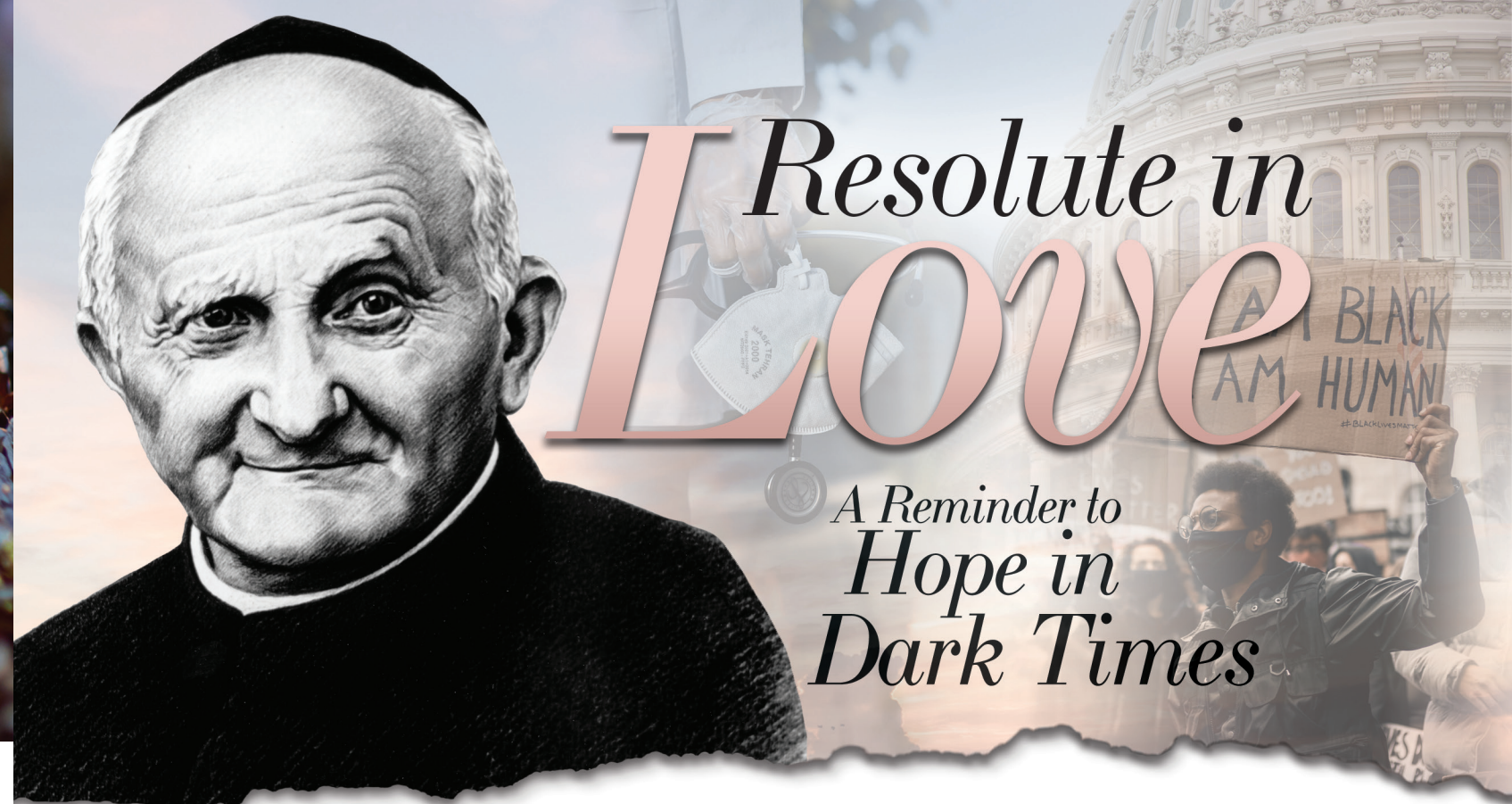
As we enter into the many feasts of the coming months, in this month of November we remember in a special way the departed members of our families and mission collaborators. May all our departed loved ones live in the loving embrace of God! It is also the season of special gratitude – not just on Thanksgiving Day, but throughout these end-of-year months when we look back in gratitude to God for the many gifts and graces we receive each day, for the big graces and the small ones too that creep into our lives. In particular, I give thanks for each one of you --- for your prayerful accompaniment as you journey with our missionaries throughout the world, and for your generous support!

The days of Advent invite us to enter into the season of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love! With HOPE and confidence in God’s LOVE may the anxieties of health and unemployment during this time of COVID-19 be alleviated. May the tensions and violence in our society and the world be embraced through the PEACE of God present among us. Assured of God’s presence with us, let us enter into the New Year 2021 with JOY!

Like many of our missionaries, such as Sr. Viera (see pg. 4), their experiences in a new mission are filled with JOYful expectation. They walk into 2021 with hope and love, encouraged and strengthened through YOUR prayers. Sr. Carol Welp’s reflection on HOPE (see pg. 3) points to the ‘shining star’, God living within us, which will make a difference in OUR world. Then, as we make the passage from one year to the next, I share a brief story of four of our Sisters who made their passage from this life to eternity during the year 2020 --- four missionary women who gave a combined 309 years in missionary service to God’s people... women of LOVE, JOY, and PEACE!

May this holy season be with you and all your loved ones during the New Year 2021!

- Sr. Mary Miller, SSpS



Resolute in Love

A Reminder to Hope in Dark Times

By: Sr. Carol Welp, SSpS

“In the world everything looks so bleak. Therefore those who love God must do all they can to bring about a change.”

(St. Arnold Janssen, 1901)

During W.W.II a Nazi war ship torpedoed a U. S. submarine and sunk it. A distress signal was immediately sent out from the sub. When another U. S. vessel got on the scene they spotted debris and oil on the water. They sent divers down to see if there were any survivors. The divers took their knives and tapped on the hull of the ship. They heard taps from the inside in Morris Code. The taps said, “Is there any hope?” In the midst of our racism, violence, upcoming elections, hurricanes, wild fires and Covid 19, I believe that is what the world is asking today: Is there any Hope?

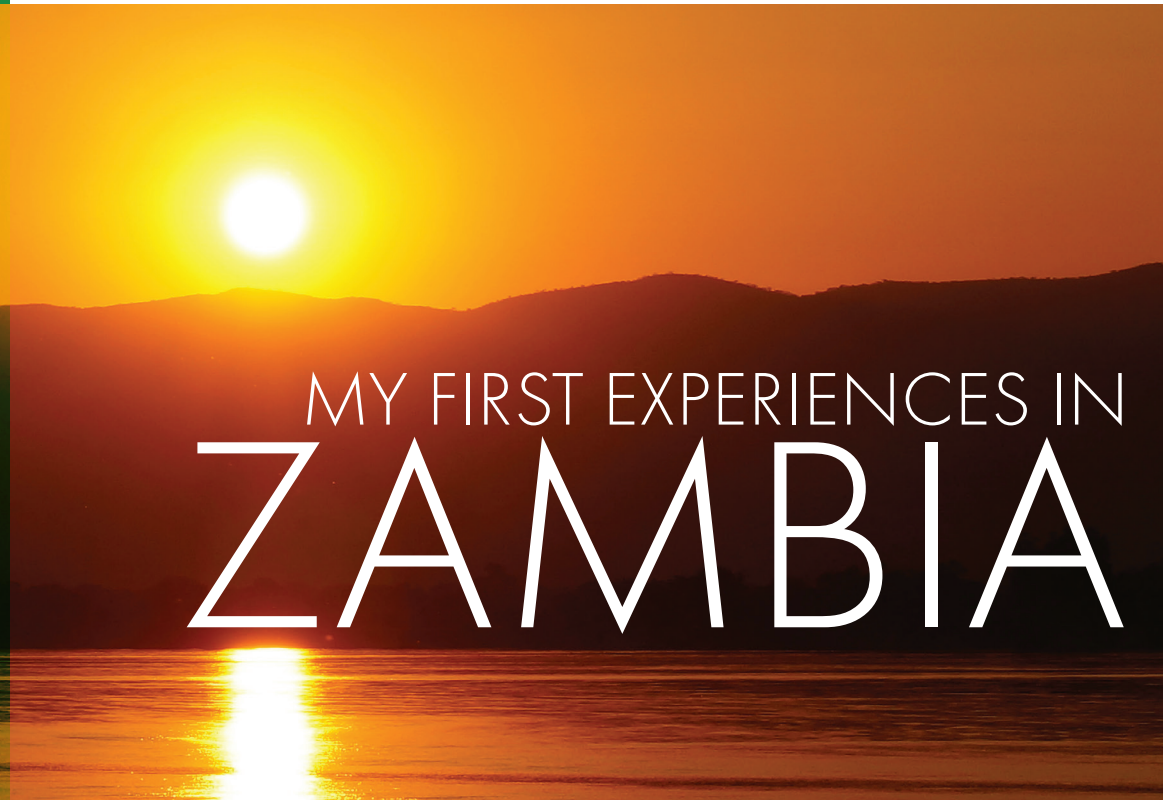
Yes everything looks bleak. Therefore those who love God must do all we can to bring about change, bring about hope. For the Triune God *living in us* makes us respond to God’s love with our love, makes us love our fellow human beings and this bring life and hope. Being a positive influence on the world around you will inspire and motivate others to stay hopeful. We all need to act together in faith, hope and love. Each of us has the capacity to influence each other to stay hopeful and where there is hope, there is life.

Father Arnold transformed the world and passed on hope through retreats, the media, education, service to the poor and prayer. He has given our world today in all its bleakness, thousands of sons and daughters who live by the Light of the Word and the Spirit of Grace. What an explosion of Hope that can bring to our world! Richard M. Gula, SS, writes that Christian discipleship “is a way of discipleship involving a personal relationship with Jesus under the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through the community of believers to bring about a world marked by peace and justice.” This surely describes a community of Hope. Let there be Hope in our World and let it begin with us. If we truly embody the change needed in our world, the world will change with us. “May the Holy Triune God live (be alive) in our hearts, and in the hearts of all people.”

AFRICA



Sr. Viera
Klabnikova, SSpS



MY FIRST EXPERIENCES IN ZAMBIA

I arrived in my new mission in Zambia in November 2019. After spending a month in our Regional Community in Livingstone, I moved to my community in Kazungula. Kazungula is a large village at the border with Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. The Zambezi River forms the border of Zambia and the other 3 countries. The bridge which connects Zambia with the other countries is under construction, therefore long lines of trucks wait to cross the river. In Kazungula, we do not have stores. For shopping, we go to Livingstone, an hour drive from Kazungula.

There is much poverty in our village, as well as other areas of Zambia. The end of 2019 was critical for many people because of the very dry season. Everyone and everything were longing for rain. Trees, flowers, and the soil, nothing could grow. Coming from a more lush country, Slovakia, I wanted to go home.

Then, I heard voices of the children behind our gate. For me that was a sign from God that among the emptiness and dryness there is life! Children, plenty of children, hungry for someone who will pay attention to them, who will listen to them, teach them, and play with them. Along with the lack of food because of the draught, we



also have problems with electricity. Some evenings we are without power. Although the people struggle with many negatives, they are very friendly. They always have a smile on their face, especially the children. Through them, I experience God's love every day!

In January 2020, I started to have art classes in our preschool and I am responsible for the parish "Kid's Club". Every Saturday around 150 children gather in our compound. We have a variety of activities for the different age levels. They have opportunities to engage in sports, singing, dancing,

help with English and math, other creative activities, along with prayer and Bible stories.

After a month of working with the children, I went to Lusaka, the capitol city of Zambia, to learn Cinyanja, one of the local languages of Zambia. Zambia has at least 72 local languages. In the class with me were six priests from different religious congregations. Along with the language studies, we also had lessons about the culture and traditions in Zambia, such as how marriages are arranged and how funerals are conducted.



During this time when the coronavirus is spreading rapidly throughout the world, the situation in Zambia is very difficult. After a period of several months the temporarily closed schools and churches are gradually re-opening. They are hungry for the spiritual nourishment of prayer and the sacraments that gives them the strength to face the other challenges of life. In other ways, we sewed 450 face masks to distribute to the poor.

Many people remain unemployed and consequently have no income. They and their families are hungry! We sought donations to support some families who are most in need of food. Among



small fish. For the children, it was fun to see two Sisters in habits standing in the river fishing.

On another occasion, when the water level of the river was low (about knee deep), we walked to the island by foot. It was a 15 km walk back and forth. When we reached the island, Mama Petronela was happy to see us. She prepared a typical Zambian lunch for us (nshima and fish). Later, on our way back home, people asked us "Where is your car?" They could not understand why Sisters were walking such a distance. Time is flying very fast! Everyday something new is happening. All these wonderful experiences have helped me to understand the life and culture of the Zambian people. Every day, I see how God is present in my life, in my mission here in Zambia. Through the people and through the situations of their lives, I express my gratitude to God for all that He is doing for me and I pray "May the Holy Triune God live in our hearts and in the hearts of all people!"



those families is an elderly woman who cannot speak. When we visit her, we try to communicate with her through hand motions. Sometimes it is very difficult to understand her but through these experiences I came to better understand the truth of St. Joseph Freinademetz's saying: "The only language understood by people everywhere is the language of love." This lady lives alone. Her children live in town but only come around when she has something that they can take from her. It is very painful for her. She showed us a large portion of land which belongs to her, but much of it was stolen from her by other people because she cannot talk and defend herself. Others just do what they want!

Another woman, one of our parishioners, lives on an island in the Zambezi River. Very often the road to the island is flooded. On one occasion when we wanted to visit her and bring her some food, we traveled by canoe. This was a wonderful experience, but I was fearful of the many crocodiles and hippos that live in the river. When we arrived in her place, we found her with two grandchildren fishing. We also started fishing with them and we caught some



Letting the Holy Spirit Work in Our Hearts

By: Ms. Pauline Shoback,
HSLLC Volunteer (Wheeling)

The Holy Spirit writes no more gospels except in our hearts. All we do from moment to moment is live this new gospel of the Holy Spirit. We, if we are holy, are the paper; our sufferings and our actions are the ink. The workings of the Holy Spirit are his pen, and with it he writes a living gospel.

Jean-Pierre de Caussade, SJ (1675-1751)

Three years ago, I began volunteering at the new Holy Spirit Life Learning Center in Wheeling, Illinois. At the Center I helped several immigrants preparing for the US citizenship exam, as they studied English and American history. Since I am an attorney, I also offered to help individuals with general legal questions, such as Medicaid qualification problems.

I enjoyed all the time I worked with several of the immigrants but working with and becoming close to one elderly gentleman at the Center has touched my heart in a very special way.

A few months after I began at the Center, I met Fred, who had fallen on very hard times. He had come to the US in 1980, was now an American citizen but had lost his job of over 30 years in maintenance

at an apartment building. He had been unsuccessful in finding employment. He was a very self-sufficient man, proud and determined to take care of himself. To make ends meet during the several months of unemployment, he had sold off some of his assets, like his car and tools, since he no longer had a paycheck to cover expenses. He impressed me with how much he wanted to work, be productive and not be home alone. Because he was in his late 70's, had some medical issues and some communication issues, searching for a job was challenging for him. Because he had sold his car and did not have transportation, he would walk around his home town of Wheeling looking for job opportunities. The Center staff began helping him by searching online for work and getting eligible unemployment benefits for him.



I met with him weekly and saw him walk to the Center even in cold winter weather because he did not have a car. As we worked together, I learned more about the story of his life. His wife and two children had died in a car accident twenty years ago, and he had no real family here in the US. I worried about how sad he looked as we met to deal with the job search and worries about his bills. I learned that he had suffered a heart attack after the deaths of his family so we tried to check on him and lift his spirits whenever we could. He did have a house and wanted very much to work so that he could keep his home and pay his mortgage. First, we were able to help him obtain some unemployment benefits and then we worked on finding a suitable job. His language challenges made the job search more difficult but he was so motivated that we pursued many leads. One job he took was too physically demanding for him but he continued working at it for a few weeks until he developed serious health problems.

While he looked for full time work, he did numerous paid odd jobs for some of my church friends and me. I also began helping him find a tenant for a small apartment that he had made in part of his house. I helped him with a lease and issues for renting. He is such a resourceful man that he found a way to get transportation and took another job. We continued to stay in touch even when he had work since we had become friends. I thought that this new job was too physically demanding for him. Despite working at it for a year, it became clear that he should leave the job. But he did not want to leave it until we were able to find another job.

We started another search for work. While we looked he again did some very helpful work for me and other church friends. During this time he also reached out to some remaining family he had overseas with whom he had no contact for a few decades. Through prayer and the help of a wonderful woman at St. Norbert Church, my local parish, we found that our Catholic School might need a maintenance worker. He was hired and it is the perfect fit for him. Fred loves being around the children. They are curious about him and the students and parents, especially the mothers, have welcomed him and treat him as a wonderful member of the school community. The principal appreciates Fred's knowledge and incredible commitment to his work. It is such a joy to see how happy and appreciated Fred is.

He and I have become friends and have this special bond from letting the Holy Spirit work in our hearts!



Life is a Gifted Journey!

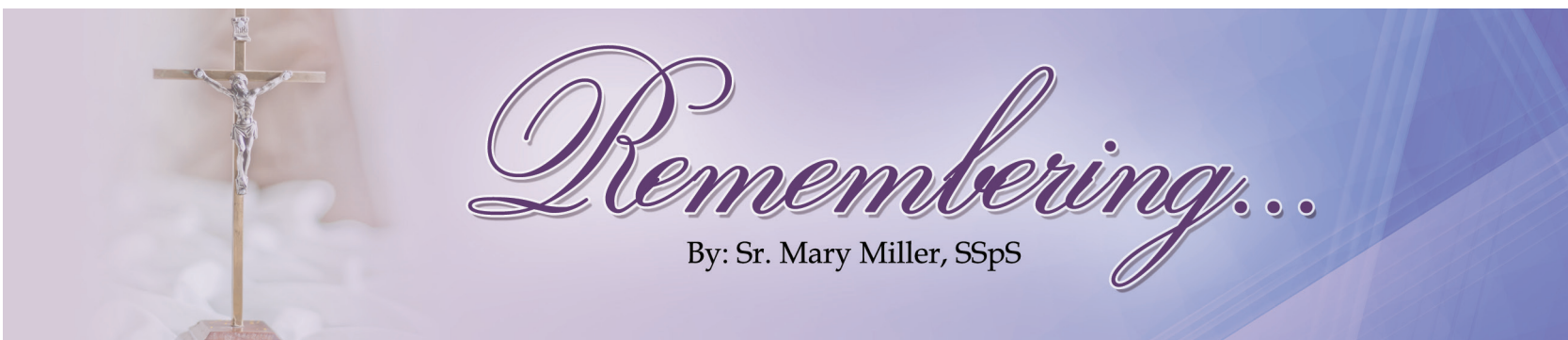
By: Patricia Snider, SSpS
Directress, HSMA



As we approach this gift giving season of Christmas, let us look at our own giftedness. Life itself is a gift, an eternal gift, which needs to be processed. That means that we need to “connect the dots” as Fr. Richard Rohr would say. If I really believe that it is a gifted journey, then I need to be aware of all the events in my life, both the good and the bad. Somehow they all fit into the pattern. Some people think that things just happen but I believe that God is present in all of these happenings.

Perhaps during this pandemic time we can take some time to reflect on this journey that we are living. We may need to make peace with part of the journey. A part that we have tried to eliminate or sometimes we have spent too much time on the bad and forgotten the many good things that have happened through God using us. Remember, sometimes the biggest disappointments and failures turn out to be the biggest blessings of our lives. At least that has been my experience because God has spoken so strongly at those times. I didn't really believe that when those things happened but later I saw them as an important part of my journey.

Some of my most blessed experiences as a retreat director or spiritual director were when a person could really say at the end of our time together that they could thank God for everything that had ever happened to them, knowing that a loving God was always walking with them. That's what I think is called “connecting the dots”. It's saying “My life is a piece of art, carried out by the divine artist.” There is a story about a famous sculptor who did very beautiful work. The student working with him watched in wonder. So one day the student used the artist's tools but he labored in vain. Then, the student's teacher told him that “you need the Spirit of the master.” That's what we need to bring our beautiful life to show forth God's work – the Spirit of God.



The month of November and the celebration of the Feast of All Souls invites us to remember in a special way all of our deceased loved ones and friends. It is also a time to remember all who have died from the COVID-19 virus, from acts of violence in our nation and throughout the world, and those who die alone with no one to remember them. In our prayerful remembrance, we also reminisce ... recalling how others have helped to shape our own lives. We are grateful for the gift they have been to us, and we pray

During 2020, four of our SSpS Sisters in the United States – Caribbean Province also joined the heavenly throng praising God for all eternity. Together, Sr. Mary Agnes Fahrland, Sr. Engratia Gales, Sr. Marie Sheehy, and Sr. Adelmara Eisenmenger generously offered 309 years in consecrated, missionary service as Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters.

Sr. Mary Agnes (Hildebalda) Fahrland (Febraury 1926 – January 29, 2020) was born in Bocholt, Germany, and entered our Congregation in 1946 in Marienau, Germany. After her 1st profession of vows in 1949, she was missioned to the USA. She remembered well her arrival in New York Harbor: “Under a clear sky and bright sun, the ship glided into New York Harbor. The Statue of Liberty shows all it stands for: Freedom – Liberty. I am in love with America, my mission country.” On completion of her nurses training at St. Therese Hospital School of Nursing, Waukegan, IL, Sr. Mary Agnes embarked on a forty year ministry in health care. For twenty-eight of those years, she was administrator of Sacred Heart Home, Hyattsville, MD where the motto for service was “Tender Loving Care”. Her years of retirement were spent Holy Spirit Convent, Northfield, where she continued to serve the community with a sense of responsibility and care for everyone.



Sr. Engratia (De Chantal) Gales (September 1916 – May 21, 2020) grew up in a large, loving family in the farmlands near Bode, Iowa. Firmly rooted in her Catholic faith, she entered the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters in 1934 joining her older sister Armella (Sr. Marguerite). Her younger sister Lucille (Sr. Carla) also entered the community a few years later. After her profession of religious vows in 1937, Sr. Engratia served in mission in our US southern missions (Mississippi) and the US eastern mission in Pennsylvania as a teacher, catechist, Church organist and music/piano-organ teacher. Her gift of music was shared with all around her. In the Diocese of San Diego, Sister served in the Religious Education Department. It was only in 2011, at the age of 95, when Sr. Engratia “retired” to a life of prayer, reading, and card playing. Up until a few days before her death, she could be found playing with her card group. In the early morning of May 21st, Sr. Engratia peacefully entered the happiness and joy of heaven. After 83 years of dedicated missionary service, we are confident she heard the words “Well done, faithful servant!” as she was embraced in the loving arms of God, her religious Sisters, and her family.



Sr. Marie (Patrick) Sheehy (January 1926 – June 28, 2020) Ella Marie was the 9th of 11 children and grew up in Grand Island, Nebraska. She entered our Congregation in 1944 and professed vows in 1947. Shortly thereafter, she began her ministry in the area of elementary education spending the next 25 years in our missions in Mississippi, Pennsylvania, and Upper Michigan. Another 25 years was dedicated to catechetical and pastoral ministry in Girard, PA and Chicago, IL. After all those years, you might think Sr. Marie was ready for retirement. Not so! Responding to HER wish to go to our new mission in Antigua, she was appointed to serve there for 6 years. Upon retirement, she continued to share life and mission by tutoring students in English and math, proofreading doctoral dissertation and other documents and helping in whatever capacities she could. In her earlier years, Sr. Marie enjoyed standing on her head! Later, she relaxed with a good book and played cards. Like Sr. Engratia, one of her card partners, she played up to a few days before her death on June 21st. In her 73 years of religious life, she accomplished all with obedience and love, patience and compassion, justice and generosity. With love, she dedicated her life to God and to helping people!



Sr. Adelmara Eisenmenger (February 1915 – July 11, 2020) At the time of her death, Sr. Adelmara was the oldest member of our Congregation. Born in Essen-Ruttenscheid, Germany (Diocese of Cologne), becoming a missionary sister and teaching children became her dream as early as the time of her First Communion in 1926. As she continued her schooling, the opportunity to learn about the 3 Congregations founded by Arnold Janssen and an opportunity to participate in a retreat in Steyl, Holland, the Motherhouse of the SSpS, settled her future life. She entered in Steyl in 1935 and professed

vows in 1938. Shortly thereafter she received her mission appointment to the USA. At first, she was disappointed because she “wanted to go to Africa and the children there”. Shortly thereafter she arrived in the US, continued her studies and in August 1944 began her 39 years of teaching ministry with African-American children in Mississippi and Arkansas. In retirement, Sr. Adelmara shared life and ministry in the Techny Community helping in the business office, at the entrance, and translating documents. Sister also participated in the Rush Religious Alzheimer Study assured that the donation of her brain would provide for the good of others. Her last gift to others!



Jubilee! Rejoice with Gratitude



Rejoice with us as we celebrate with gratitude the lives of our SSpS Sister Jubilarians – Sr. Maria Elisabeth Klodt (70 years), Sr. Priscilla Burke (60 years), Sr. Judith Vallimont (60 years), Sr. Anita Marie Gutierrez (50 years) and Sr. Xaveriana Ngene (25 years)! Through their loving, joyful and generous contributions to the mission of the Church and our Congregation, they touched many lives in the ministries of healthcare (Sr. Maria Elisabeth – Pharmacist), education (Sr. Priscilla – Elementary and High School / Sr. Judith – Elementary & University), and catechetics / pastoral ministry (Sr. Anita Marie & Sr. Xaveriana). The Sisters also served in various positions of Congregational, Provincial, and Community Leadership... always giving of themselves in loving service to others as they daily respond “Here am I, send me!” to the call of God “Come follow Me!” Thank you, dear Sisters, for your faithful, daily response to God’s invitation! Thank you for sharing your love and talents with all those whom you touch throughout your years of ministry!

Dear Mission Friends and Supporters, we wish to assure you and your loved ones of our daily prayers of support during this time of the coronavirus pandemic. May our loving God be with all who are suffering and protect medical personnel, health-care providers, and first responders as they carry out their daily responsibilities. We invite those of you who can to join us in mission through your generous financial support for the Mission Ministries of the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters.

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The Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters are an international—intercultural community of 3,000 Catholic, religious women, serving in 48 countries. Missionary activities include pastoral work and catechesis, education, nursing and health care, social work, adult education, and many other services to promote human dignity.



Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters

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