



SSps MISSION

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Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters | USA & Caribbean | NOVEMBER 2021

GRATITUDE

EXPECTATION

JOY

SEASON'S GREETINGS

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Sr. Barbara Miensopust, SSpS smiling behind the mask as she faithfully serves the wonderful people of Morant Bay, Jamaica.

Focus on Mission...

During the past six-to-eight weeks or so, we experienced the gradual “opening up” from the confinements related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In person celebrations of the Eucharist (Mass), children returning to school, and parents and other adults back “on the job” are happening. In the midst of the frustrations and challenges of ‘that time’, we continuously called upon God’s love and compassion, God’s healing touch and guiding hand. The work of “mission” became very personal during the pandemic – expressed in our being present to those suffering with the illness; supporting with our prayers all those ministering in emergency and healthcare situations; encouraging our younger members with on-line studies; accompanying the unemployed and all who lost their business. When you reach out to one another, the other, with your love and compassion, you are ‘in mission’! You are a missionary! You are carrying on the mission and ministry of Christ in our world today!

As we quickly ebb toward the final months of 2021, we meet at the juncture of ‘looking back’ and ‘looking forward’... a somewhat peaceful time of ‘what has been’ and ‘what will be...’. During this year of 2021, the Year of St. Joseph, we had the opportunity to draw closer to St. Joseph – faithful husband, loving father; protector and guardian; loyal companion in our journey of life! May his presence and companionship continue to accompany us in our life.

From summer warmth to autumn colors toward Christmas joy and a peace-filled New Year, we renew our personal commitment to MISSION! We assure you of our prayers that God will bless you and your loved ones with peace and love. We are grateful for your companionship “with us” in mission through your prayers and support. We wish you God’s continued blessing for 2022!

- Sr. Mary Miller, SSpS



Saint Joseph

Obedient
Faith-filled
Silent
Courageous

By: Sr. Vincent Wolff, SSps

St. Joseph was a silent man of faith and an observer of the law. As a carpenter, he supported Mary and Jesus. Although he is 'silent' throughout the words of Scripture, his strong character and undeniable presence is apparent in the infancy narratives of the Gospel. Joseph was a man of action when necessary and attentive to God's wishes. He was trusted to carry out God's plan without knowing how it would work out.

We know of at least three times when God sent an angel to give directions to Joseph about the action he was to take: "Take Mary as your wife." (Mt 1:20); "Flee into Egypt." (Mt 2:13) and "Return to your homeland." (Mt 2:20). Joseph never questioned the orders! Obediently and courageously, he carried out God's Will.

Jesus was referred to as "Isn't this the carpenter's son?" (Mt 13:55) to which we might imply that Joseph was known for his good work. Joseph was a traveler. Responding to the orders of King Herod, Joseph and Mary traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem, some 80 miles. There were no modern conveniences and Mary was pregnant.

In Bethlehem, since there was no room in the inn, Joseph had to find a place for them to stay. He had to protect his wife from the elements. As a carpenter, he must have wanted to provide a comfortable bed for Jesus. Instead, there was only a manger! Shortly thereafter, we can assume that Joseph welcomed the shepherds.

Again, at the time of the Presentation in the Temple, the Holy Family traveled to Jerusalem and back. By that time, Joseph had found a house since we read that the Magi "came to the house where they lived" (Mt 2:11).

Just when one could expect events to go smoothly, plans again changed. An angel arrived to announce that Joseph was to take Mary and the child and flee to Egypt because the life of the child was endangered by Herod. Immediately, Joseph got up and left for Egypt. It was a trip through the desert to safety, a trip of about 200 miles to the Egyptian border. They were refugees! What courage and obedience was demonstrated by Joseph. After sometime, they traveled home again. Home at last!

Reflecting on these events in the life of Joseph, let us ask his intercession for husbands / fathers who have difficulty supporting their family; for refugees; for persons seeking to follow the Will of God; for those seeking employment; for the safety of all travelers; for those having difficulties with their faith; and for the Universal Church. May we never forget that St. Joseph was a faithful husband, father, and provider.

E.C.D. Early Childhood Development



IN

MADANG CATHOLIC CHURCH,
PAPUA NEW GUINEA



Early Childhood Development takes place with children between the ages of three to five years. This is the time for their first significant contacts with the world expanding their experiences within the family and among friends; discovering God's creation, nature, and other living things. At these tender ages, the child starts to develop essential life skills such as language competence and reasoning; observation, listening, inquiring, and performance skills; the freedom and joy of playing with other children. Their brains are expanding and their senses become alert, ready to go for anything attractive. They need adults who care, direct and help them develop their potentials and to experience themselves as someone special.

Our goal was to design programs and to offer services which will implement the curriculum of "ECD". As I visited ECD schools in other Provinces of PNG, I noticed the lack of knowledge of the importance of ECD. I told parishioners we have to work hard to make ECD effective. It would be necessary to involve as many people as possible in the formation of a strong faithful committee, consisting of Parish Priest, ECD Director, ECD Board, Parents and Citizens interested in children's welfare to take a supportive role.

The Early Childhood Development (ECD) Program in Madang Cathedral Parish began in 2017. It was an initiative of the Catholic Church in partnership with "UNICEF" (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund). Archbishop Stephen OFM, Cap, Sr. Mary Claude Gadd, and Cathy Patuvii are the persons behind this initiative for Madang. The Early Childhood Development (ECD) Schools for now are self-reliant. However, UNICEF was spearheading the teacher training segments, while the parishes are responsible for the administration of the schools. Until the present, the Government has not provided any financial support or any materials. The parents and guardians pay the school fees for their children that are used for salaries and materials.

Our goal is to help children grow and develop in loving, compassionate, social, psychological, healthy and spiritual ways so that they will be good citizens of Papua New Guinea. Learning enriches their spiritual, physical, psychological, social and emotional life. The beginning was very challenging! The children did not know how to follow instruction. However, when they gradually got themselves

By: Sr. Uloma Akpa, SSpS



together and settled down in their new environment, the positive transformation started to bloom and everything contributed to a wonderful harmony. This was very rewarding for me! The parish priest, the teachers, parents, guardians, caregivers, and friends were impressed because of what began with eight children in ECD has grown to three hundred participants. All witnessed the energy and happiness of the children in speaking English. I challenge the children to continue speaking English. Pidgin English, is a simplified means of communication developed among traders and various tribal peoples of PNG in earlier years to facilitate trade. Frequently, It is the language used at home with “BUBUS”, the Grandparents.

Education personnel agree that in the past six years the standard of education has dropped drastically in Madang Province. Therefore, I had meetings with them. I suggested that Early Childhood Development programs will contribute significantly to raise the standard of education in the Madang Province. It is a key to light up the future of PNG. Early Childhood Development will bring a spirit of peace, harmony, and friendship among sponsors, parents with their children, guardians, friends, and teachers. The hatred and killing, the abuse of women, and other forms of injustice, which stir the fires of revenge will diminish.

Therefore, my dear sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus let the healing process of our ECD children begin with us by joining me in working together as one BODY of Christ and supporting the ECD program.

CHALLENGES:

From its initial development in 2018, the greatest challenge was identifying and encouraging members of the community to serve on the local school boards. Many people in the local areas felt inadequate or lacked the skills necessary for the position. Local areas also lacked the materials to teach the children. I traveled to different places to seek assistance and to purchase stationery materials; English, math and science textbooks; story books; toys; pencils and art materials. I sought help from our Sisters in community and elsewhere. In many situations, the teachers were not committed to the job or ministry. Parents had difficulty procuring the enrollment fees. There were some situations where the teachers even stole the children’s school fees. Consequently, the area programs lacked sufficient funds to pay the teachers and to run the ECD program. However, I encouraged the faithful and committed teachers to keep going and not to give up despite the challenges.

Sometimes parents were angry because their child was not admitted for the program. The four classes were full! Three hundred and thirty-four (334) children were enrolled and the large classes did not create a healthy learning environment for the children. Later, parents came to apologize and ask forgiveness for their angry behaviors. Missionaries ministering in these circumstances must have a vibrant mission spirit and a generous, compassionate, loving heart. Love is everything for mission!

The Center struggled to move forward at first

as it was a new concept to most of the parents. They questioned the importance of the center and the qualifications of the teachers to teach the children, ages 3-5, as it is a critical learning stage for them. Sometimes it is a challenge to deal with the children as they are more in a 'playing and crying' stage. It is difficult for them to stay in one place for any length of time. It's true that controlling more than three hundred and thirty-four little children to pay attention, listen, and follow instruction is not easy! It is sometimes frustrating and always challenging.

However, after six months, when the children started to speak English and spell words on their own, their eyes opened! They admired the work of God and the work of the teachers. They were grateful for the leadership of Sr. Uloma and they recognized the importance of the Early Childhood Development program.

The years of struggling have passed for now. The first groups of children in the ECD programs have graduated with "flying colors"! We are grateful to God for His awesome, merciful grace and wonderful work!

Regardless of the challenges and frustrations, I love them dearly with a compassionate heart. Children are God's gift and they need to be loved,

protected, and accepted for the person they are and the way they are!

In carrying out GOD'S Mission, Early Childhood Development, I rely on the powerful prayer to Mary, the Rosary. Praying the Rosary renews my enthusiasm and energy, strengthens me to proclaim the Love and Peace of Jesus as I carry out my teaching mission service under the guidance of the Holy Triune God!

Parents are reminded of their role as care providers and stewards of God, who is Creator and Father of us all. God has a plan for every child and the parental role is to help their children to discern their personal plan so that they will come to know God's will for them.

Mary and Joseph brought the child Jesus to the Temple and offered Him to God. They gradually learned the difficult meaning of this offering when Jesus said to them: "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2: 49). Let us accompany children in the discernment of their vocation. Let us help children discover and affirm the call and gift that God has for them; so that they too may rejoice and sing Mary's Magnificent...."My soul proclaims the greatness of God..."

Missionaries ministering in these circumstances must have a vibrant mission spirit and a generous, compassionate, loving heart.

Love is everything for mission!



MY MEXICO



BEAUTIFUL AND BELOVED

By: Sr. Jana Smutna, SSpS

When I look back, I am grateful for all that I have received and experienced. I feel very enriched in many ways, I am enchanted by the beauty and the cultural diversity of Mexico. Oaxaca, where I have lived for two years, is beautiful, resplendent in its many colors. Although the pandemic of COVID-19 does not allow us to live as we did before, I experience that here life is not only lived but rather it is celebrated at every moment.

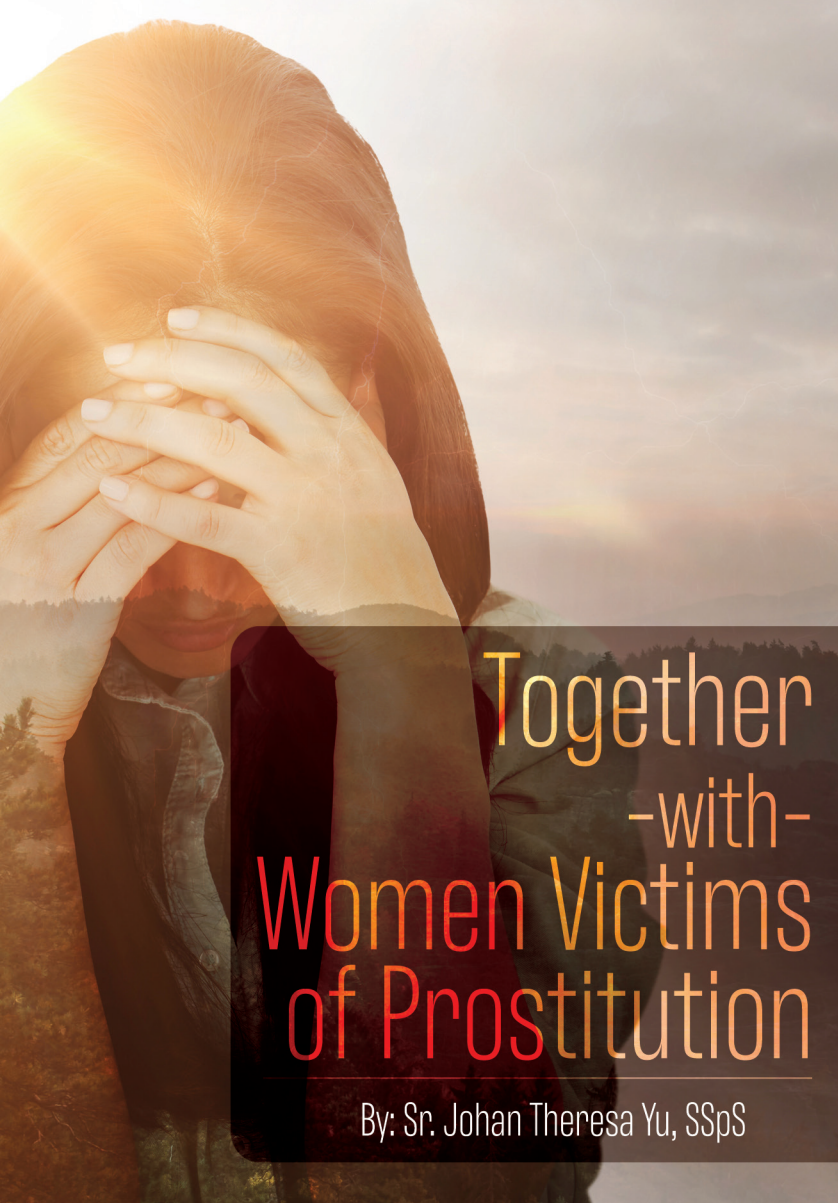
At the same time, I am impressed by the simplicity and the humble faith of many people who, in the midst of so many difficulties, worries and illnesses, go to the Lord's feet for solutions. For me, it is an incomparable experience that invites me to live my own consecrated life with hope and with joy.

As I serve the older people, the sick, the children and the youth in my various apostolates here in Mexico, I have received many blessings myself.

God has shown me that life is sacred in all its stages. Reflecting on my missionary commitment, I came to the conclusion that the "true mission blossoms from a loving heart". In other words, God calls me to love all those who He gives me without excluding anyone. Today I look at the mission as an encounter with the Sacred.



Sr. Jana arrived in Mexico for her cross-cultural experience in 2018. Presently she is working in the State of Oaxaca in youth ministry and is teaching English to the little ones who come to the Josepha Stenmanns Childcare Center. She will soon return to Slovakia to prepare for final vows.



Together -with- Women Victims of Prostitution

By: Sr. Johan Theresa Yu, SSpS

From November 2019, Sr. Pacis Kim and I started working with women victims of prostitution through the Women’s Human Rights Center called “Shego”, which means “Resting” in Paju, South Korea.

For women who have survived prostitution and now live alone, support and medical care are what they need most. Today, many women are suffering and wandering in the life of prostitution. It is a great courageous act to be with them, look after them, and try to help them. The daily programs, such as, field visits, counseling, legal and medical support, and education are great challenges for us.



Sr. Pacis Kim at the Women’s Rights Center “Shego”.

We support the victims of prostitution who quit this work and help them to become independent in society. Medical support such as obstetrics, gynecology, dentistry, and mental health is given priority. Periodically, we visit places of prostitution to distribute promotional materials, newsletters and contact information about our center “Shego” where they can get help at any time.

I personally meet women and provide psychological and emotional support, especially for victims with extreme stress. The psychological counseling and various helps lead them to a good outcome of self-reliance. They appreciate our help and want to volunteer themselves. In this ministry, I pray that the women can find meaning in their lives.

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted
and saves the crushed in spirit.

- Psalm 34:18 -



SOLIDARITY with THREATENED INDIGENOUS GROUP IN BRAZIL

By: Sr. Stella Maris Martins, SSpS



The indigenous Pataxó Hã-Hã-Hãe group was directly affected by the collapse of the 'Vale' mining company's dam in 2019 in Brumadinho, State of Minas Gerais, Brazil. The Paraopeba River, on which they depended for survival, was totally contaminated by the mining company's failings.

They were forced to leave their territory and move to the outskirts of the capitol, Belo Horizonte. Living in conditions of vulnerability, insecurity, and precariousness, at least 23 indigenous people were infected with COVID-19.

In solidarity with them, members of the Association of Japanese-Brazilian Culture of Minas Gerais performed a heroic act of donating 70% of a 36-hectare plot of land. This land has been invaded by land grabbers since 2010 who refuse to leave and have been burning the forest, cutting down trees, and threatening the safety of the group.

The State has shown itself 'absent'. The Federal Police so far have failed to provide security for the indigenous people. Fundamental rights such as access to water and electricity are not guaranteed.

On the other hand, the indigenous people have sought to revitalize the area by taking care of the existing trees and planting new ones in the devastated places. Several concerned individuals

and many groups from civil society have formed a network of solidarity with the indigenous people, helping them meet their basic needs like building houses and fighting for their rights.



Sr. Stella Maris Martins works for the cause of indigenous peoples and shares the plight of an indigenous group that was the victim of an environmental crime that forced them to abandon their territory.



THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN TRANSFORM US THROUGH OUR TROUBLED WORLD!

I believe this statement, but I also believe that the Holy Spirit would probably like some help from us to do this. We need to avoid depression and remember that Scripture tells us that “All things work together unto good”. It seems that the Spirit is truly speaking to us; calling us to be transformed, through our troubled world, into the people that God wants us to be.

I can identify with Fr. John Coutinho, a Jesuit priest from India, who shared in his book “How Big Is Your God?” how this Scripture passage from Isaiah influenced him. “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the baby she has born? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands. (Is 49:15-16)”

When Fr. John asked his rabbinical professor if ‘being engraved’ meant the same as ‘being tattooed’, the professor found that he was correct. We are ‘tattooed’ on God’s hand. God is saying “you are mine” to all people. What a beautiful thought. But then we have to think about all of us being God’s family. That is a big step!

As we look at our world today, we see the Afghans who had to abandon their country and enter different countries by the thousands; the people in Louisiana, New York, and New Jersey who are desperate at their many losses, some even family members. What about the people in the West who sacrificed their homes and environment to the fires? Haiti with its disastrous earthquake is heart breaking! Our Sr. Marie Eunide’s family lost their home in the earthquake. We are also aware of the people coming to us from Central America, looking for asylum from dangerous situations. How many millions of people throughout the world have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic!

As members of God’s family how do we endure these pains of fear and loss? How often we go about our life as though nothing is happening! I think the Spirit is growing us, transforming us. When a family member hurts, we all hurt! We look for ways to help the person.

How does allowing the sorrows of the world to invade our consciousness change us? First, we put ourselves and our own interests aside. To connect with others in their suffering, demands compassion on our part. Joyce Rupp defines it this way. “Compassion is being with others in their suffering, entering their pain so that I am no longer an observer but a PARTICIPANT.”

What can we do? Pray! Through prayer, we can participate in the pain and suffering of others asking God to offer strength and healing to the oppressed and suffering. Some of us may be able to offer physical or financial help. Most important of all, however, we can develop an attitude of acceptance and love for all people! Remember, we are all tattooed on God’s loving hand! We can be God’s hand reaching out to all in our great big family! The disciples of Jesus, especially those closest to him, discover that the more we identify with Jesus, greater the chance we may suffer the same consequences that He had to undergo. Can we be transformed to meet this challenge? Come Holy Spirit!

Sr. Pat Snider, SSpS

Holy Spirit Missionary Association, Directress



Remembering



Sr. Betty Tranel, SSpS
1926 – August 19, 2021

Sr. Jeanne Blie, SSpS
1924 – October 21, 2021

Sr. Betty was in her 95th year of life and 74th year of religious profession as a Holy Spirit Missionary Sister at the time of her death August 19, 2021. She served as a teacher in our mission schools in Mississippi for many years. In the 1970's she devoted her service to catechesis (religious education) and training lay catechists for ministry in their local parishes. Later, she continued her ministry in parishes in the Chicago area. Through her dedicated service and loving care for others, she touched many lives. May she enjoy the peace and love of God's embrace!

Sr. Jeanne was in her 97th year of life and 62nd year of religious profession as a Holy Spirit Missionary Sister at the time of her death October 21, 2021. She was part of a large family where she learned respect and loyalty for family and friends, love for books, and sports. After World War II, Jeanne worked with the Department of the Army in Austria & Germany. In religious life, Sr. Jeanne carried out her ministry in the business offices of our hospitals, nursing home, and province center. She especially enjoyed her work with the volunteer Candy Strippers at St. Therese Hospital.



Join Us in Mission

Meet some of our Sisters and learn about our mission service with "Christ Over Coffee" Through your prayers and generous support, YOU are in mission with us!



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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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