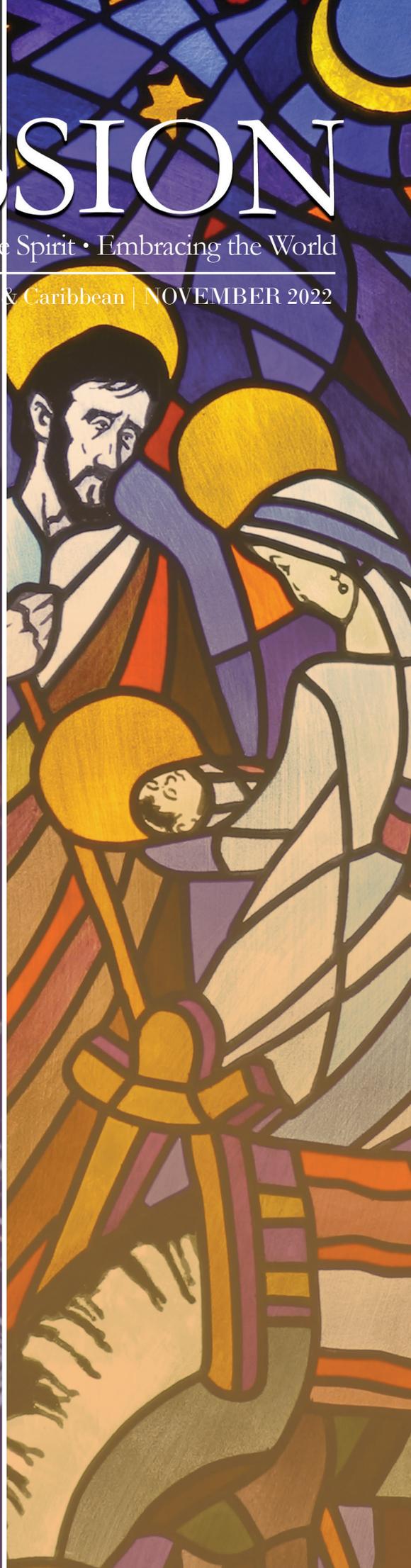
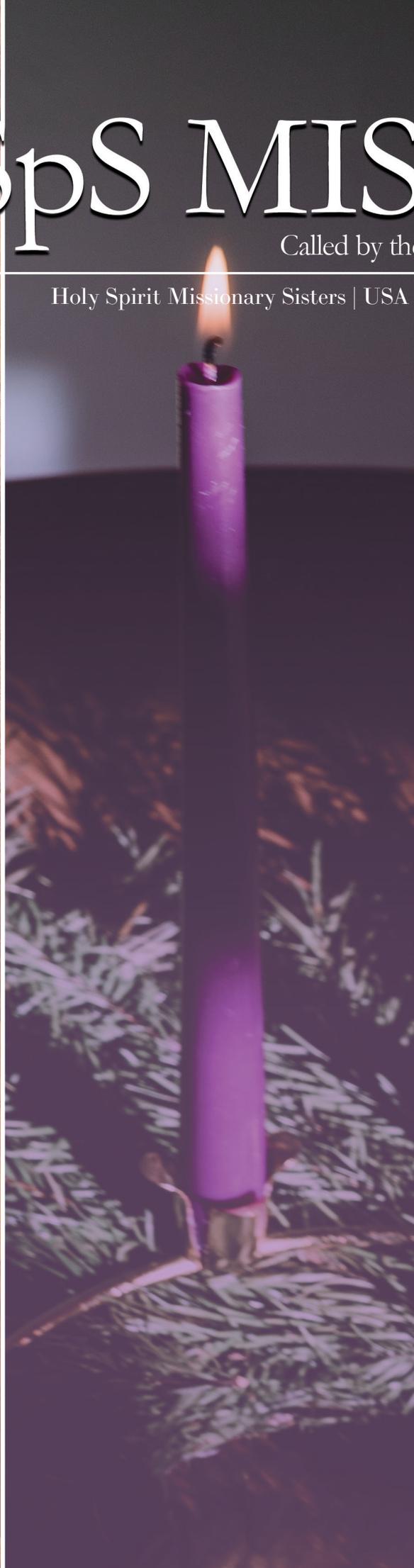




SSpS MISSION

Called by the Spirit • Embracing the World

Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters | USA & Caribbean | NOVEMBER 2022



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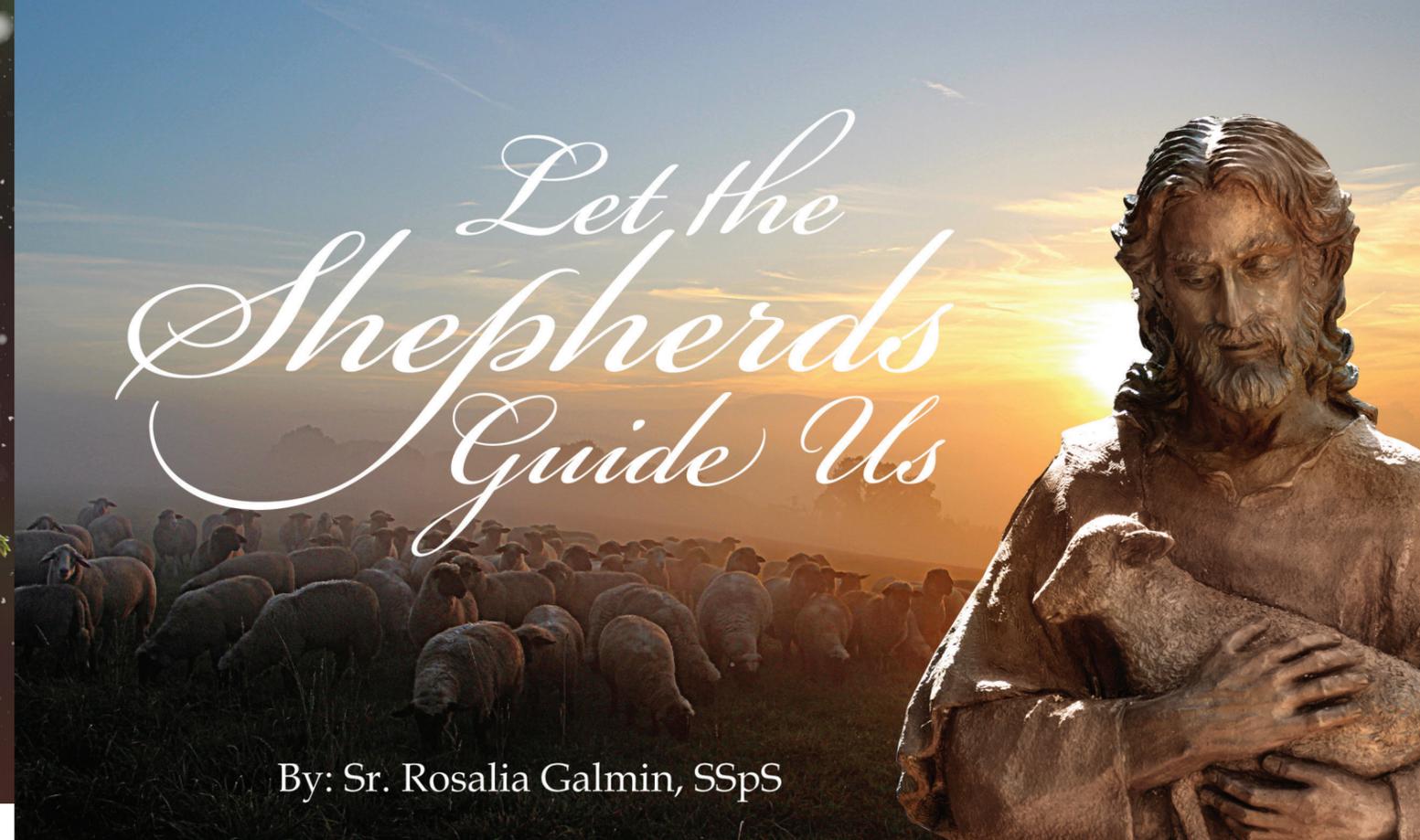
Focus on Mission...

We are in the season of GRATITUDE, ANTICIPATION, JOY, and HOPE! As the year 2022 draws to a close, we give THANKS to God for each one of YOU, our Mission Partners! Your thoughts and PRAYERS that accompany our Missionary Sisters throughout the world are a source of blessing and a gift of strength when they encounter the varied challenges of their mission service. Please continue to support them with your PRAYERS. We give THANKS to those who contribute to the work of mission through your generous FINANCIAL support. Without your assistance, our Sisters are limited in their ability to provide for the physical needs (health care, education, social services, and so forth) of the people among whom they serve. THANK YOU!

The Year 2023! In ANTICIPATION, we continue to count on your collaboration in mission with us! For, you are Missionary! You are Missionary when you offer a 'helping hand' to one who is in need. You are Missionary when you give a listening ear to one who is alone or lonely. You are Missionary when you offer an encouraging word to one who needs a 'pat on the back'. You are Missionary each time you offer a prayer for those in need and those who work to fill those needs.

Therefore, may the Year 2023 be a year of JOY and HOPE for all of us! May the peoples of our world experience peace from conflicts and war! May you and your loved ones be blessed with Peace, Joy, and Hope!

Sr. Mary Miller, SSpS



By: Sr. Rosalia Galmin, SSpS

As we journey towards the end of the year 2022, we remember many things we have encountered throughout the year, both those that brought joy and need to be celebrated and those which have challenged us, but also have strengthened our hope in God's grace.

As we celebrate the coming of Emmanuel on Christmas day, we usually focus our attention on the three main figures: Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. I propose that we look at that anew. You might wonder what I could see differently? I would like to invite all of us to come and spend a moment with the Shepherds who were the least of all in society, almost people no one would have as friends. They are the group of people who bear their fears, their uncertainties, and hopelessness in silence. But they must have been firm in their belief that the God of Hope and Promise is their God too. That conviction made them perfect channels of God's surprising grace. They were the ones who responded in faith to the coming of the Promised One in Israel, precisely chosen by God, I believe, to lift the condition of darkness and fear from them and in their response of faith and their simple act of kindness offered the room for the Messiah. They were the ones chosen to be the first messengers to tell others about the wonderful things they had been told.

As I listened to a webinar given by Fr. John Dardis, SJ speaking about "**Discernment in the Digital Era: How Not to Lose Focus?**" I can see parallels with the situation of the society at Jesus' time. He says, for instance, that we are living in a world of division and fears fed incessantly by media platforms. We do not want to be part of that narrative. We want the narrative of Jesus, the narrative of hope.

We are living in the time and reality where the outcasts and strangers are in our midst, unrecognized and unattended. But we profess to be called to walk with them and to listen to their stories. Their stories are always part of our stories and therefore part of God's story of redemption. That's why I propose to look at the shepherds as models of mission. They dared to proclaim what was to be the reserved mission of the "learned and chosen", but we must work on building this narrative of hope and oneness in God. All of us, through our baptism, are missionary. As Pope Francis reminded us in his message for World Mission Sunday, "YOU are My Witnesses!" Like the Shepherds, How are we proclaiming the "Good News" of God's love in the world of our daily lives?



ENDLESS HUNGER IN *Mozambique*



Sr. Maria Aloysia Suryati Murni, SSpS
Mozambique Region

According to the UN, 193 million people faced “acute food insecurity” in 53 countries or territories last year. Despite the 22% increase in people going hungry, the general worsening trend continues.

The change of climate makes it impossible for the peasant farmer to collect the produce he grows. This situation happens in Liupo and Mogincual where we are evangelizing. Both districts are located in the Province of Nampula, Northern Mozambique.

In 2020/2021 there was a severe drought so the plants died. Then, in February 2022, Cyclone Gombé affected a lot. Liupo and Mogincual were seriously hit. Many houses collapsed, crops were lost. There is no hope that agricultural production will recover this year. People have become discouraged. We have especially children and the elderly suffering from illnesses. Natural calamities have intensified in recent times adding to the famine.

We from the Mission Team that serves Liupo and Mogincual, have visited the communities to listen to their concerns. They say that our presence gives them joy and hope. The Team distributes food products to Christians and people of other religions. We also give monetary help to those who need to go to the hospital. Everything we do is thanks to God who calls and sends us to live and witness his love in this mission. We thank our Congregations and the donors who generously share their goods to alleviate hunger.



At the service of **MIGRANT PEOPLE** in BRAZIL

Sr. Margarete Scapinelli Conte, SSpS
Province of Brazil North



The odyssey of migrating, permeated by xenophobia and a pandemic, makes everything seem even more difficult. The year 2021 was especially challenging for CIM – Center for Migrant Integration in the Brás, neighborhood of São Paulo - Brazil.

There were many families, children and women in situations of vulnerability and personal risk, even greater than in previous years. Approximately 1,700 people of 21 nationalities were attended to at the Center. They received items such as food, clothes, hygiene and cleaning kits, as well as social, psychological and documentary orientation.

Looking at the situation of the people, I asked myself: Lord, how will the poor live if this pandemic does not stop? How will they manage to “live”? 2022 began and God did not abandon us. With the arrival of more collaborators and volunteers, our courses, activities and services returned to normal. New

house, donations arriving, everything very simple, many things used and needing renewing, but it is what we have.

Even with many things missing, we brought back the Portuguese course for adults, professional courses in bakery and handicraft for women, Portuguese and English courses for children and adolescents, guitar classes for adults and children, art classes, including drama, school complementation, social and psychological care, document orientation, conversation circles with varied topics, especially focusing on daily issues such as violence against women, re-establishment of family and community ties. Not to mention the integration and intercultural activities such as Bolivian Children’s Day, Carnival, Mother’s Day, Zumba course, among others. Despite all our simplicity, nothing compensates the affection and the trust placed in us.



Activities with children and a bakery course for women. Above, Sisters Janice de Santana (left) and Margarete with Bolivian mother and son.



**INDIA EAST:
SLOW AND SURE...
HEARTS
ARE WON!**

Sr. Anita Bandod, SSpS - Maria Bhavan,
Duburi, Province of India Este

If we are chosen by Christ to participate in his saving mission, it is not in the way we want, but in the way that He chooses. For the Maria Bhavan mission, Duburi, (East India) it is our silver anniversary year. Our presence marks a ray of light in the lives of the people with whom we work. Our target group is one of the primitive sections of society, for whom modernization is far away. It is an irony to see how a very wealthy society coexists with another that lives day by day. They did not choose to be in that position, but the social systems pushed them to the margins, to poverty, illiteracy and lack of education.

Our presence in this Mission has had a great impact on the lives of these poor people. We are dedicated to health care, education, social work and pastoral care. Through the Health Care Mission, the SSpS Sisters are able to save thousands of lives, especially in childbirth. Alcoholism and poor health are the most demotivating factors keeping people from achieving a good education and a good standard of living.

After two decades of our mission here, we are able to motivate families to send their children to school. We keep these children in our boarding

school and give them the best motivation and education possible. Even in the 21st century, not all parents understand the value of education for the new generation. It is a shame to see that many children drop out of school before completing their formal education.

The Duburi Mission is a special child of INE. Every success story is good news for us. An entry into the life of these people is a plunge into decades past. The goodwill and hard work of the Sisters in the Duburi mission is slowly bearing fruit. In a world that moves quickly, through this mission, God calls us to go slowly, taking these disadvantaged brothers and sisters by the hand and leading them in their space to a world with better facilities and opportunities.



Sr. Pricilla Baa with the children of the Hostel in the village of Duburi, State of Odisha.

A Place for Ecumenism



Interreligion in Japan

Sr. Scholastica Ogasawara, SSpS - Province of Japan

Many people participate in the Labyrinth Meditation Program run by the Sisters, and find inspiration for their spiritual journey. Koganei Holy Spirit Convent is located in the western suburbs of Tokyo. A labyrinth was built there in 2011. I first learned of the labyrinth from a drawing on the back cover of a booklet given to me as conference material at the 13th General Chapter at Steyl in 2008.

In 2010, the kindergarten was closed and the site was converted into a parking lot and a small garden. But there was still a playground left untouched, thus came to my mind the idea of building a labyrinth. It is a five-circle shape, using natural materials (hardened earth for the walking path and green jade dragons for the edges) and widening the path, wishing that people in wheelchairs could use it. This was the first outdoor labyrinth in Japan.

News of our labyrinth was spread through the Internet and lectures at universities by Dr. Michiyo Takeda, a certified labyrinth facilitator, and counselor. We started holding the "Labyrinth Meditation program" once a month. Many people, individually and in groups, come to pray here and it became a place for ecumenical gathering and inspiration to those who are planning to have labyrinths in their places, like Buddhist monks and Asian Rural Institute in Tochigi.



UKRAINE

The Mission of the Sisters

Before the war, Sister started her studies in Rome. In January, she returned to Ukraine to continue her studies until September. Now she does not know whether this will be possible. Before the war her community lived in Chmelnyzkyj, the capital of the administrative region of the same name, where our Sisters were present since 1995. However, now they had to move to the village Matkivtsi, where they are accommodated by the Franciscan Minors and where they can offer help to people who fled from the areas most affected by the war. The war has influenced not only the external life of the sisters: "I have become a different person, psychologically and also spiritually", the missionary Sister says. "This situation has raised questions in me which are touching my relationship to God as well as my faith life."

A New Reality

On February 24, Sr. Svitlana was together with her fellow Sisters in a village near Winnyzja. In the morning they were awakened by the noise of explosions. After the first perplexed moment, "Maybe it is an accident?", came the shock and the questions: "How can this be possible? Does it really happen?" This "unbearable pain" is still there and becomes stronger, when Sr. Svitlana meets people who have looked into the eyes of death and listens to them: wounded soldiers whom she visited in the military hospital; refugees who during their flight have seen people dying. "To listen to them raises many questions to God, among them also the question about the nature of evil. Before the war I knew that evil exists but it did not touch our lives as much as it does now. This is another reality in which God, who suffers and is crucified, is also there And God has answered me with the question: 'Do you want to enter together with me into this reality?' I do not want to run away from it by creating my own illusory world, but I want to be there and to remain there to do as much good as possible."

In Matkivtsi, at the pilgrimage church Our Lady of Fatima, the Missionary Sisters together with the Franciscan Minors offer help to the needy. During the first weeks of war they organized a shelter for the refugees. After some time, the influx of internally displaced persons has become less. Therefore the Sisters decided to open a small center for humanitarian help. They distribute clothes, food, and medicine and offer their time by listening. "For the refugees it is important to know that they can come here and are helped and listened to", Sr. Svitlana says. "In this situation where evil is clearly visible, it is very important to know that there is also a lot of good."

Prayer as a support

The rhythm of common prayer has changed. The time is often changed because of urgent responsibilities. "But my personal prayer has become much more intense. Sometimes I wake up during the night and pray. And the prayer becomes a cry: 'Please, do something!' It is not anymore a praying or asking for something, but it is about wresting God's help." Also her fellow Sister, Sr. Viktoria, speaks about a similar prayer experience. At the outbreak of the war, she was in Greece where she fulfilled her mission at the Jesuit Refugee Service since 2019. "In the first week I just cried, read the news, called my friends and relatives in Ukraine, and prayed day and night. I asked them to tell me if they would be in a critical situation. A friend of mine lived in one of the villages near Kiev which were occupied by Russian military at the beginning of the war. For some time she hid with her family in a basement, not knowing whether to flee or to remain. She asked all the time for my prayers, and I asked God: "Save them, help them to flee, make them invisible. When they were able to flee, I felt relieved."

In such moments, the need to pray can be compared with the need to breath. So Sister decided to return to Ukraine. Her fellow Sisters in Chmelnyzkyj did not agree because in the entire country there was danger of bombing. "Originally I came from Crimea and already have lost my homeland. Therefore I decided to go home to Ukraine." The Sister says: "I want to share fears, sufferings, and the faith with my fellow countrymen." She added that she was surprised to see how many prayers and liturgies there are every day in the pilgrimage church, Our Lady of Fatima in Matkivtsi. The displaced people who arrive, often ask the Sisters to pray with them or to pray for their loved ones who have remained in the most affected places. Sr. Svitlana adds: "For us, these last two months were also a very intensive time of evangelisation, of witness for the presence of God."

Trust in God

"My former experience with God gives me the trust that when we go through severe tests and sufferings, and when the price will be very high, the reward will be high. My experience tells me that God never plays with us. If he allows such things to happen, it means: He knows that we will be able to overcome all these. And he will carry us in his arms through everything."

(From: Geist und Auftrag, 3/2022, a magazine of the Holy Spirit Association in Germany and Austria)



SAYING "YES" TO GOD

DEMANDS THE SPIRIT'S STRENGTH



In the weeks ahead we will celebrate the lives of two very special people who dared to say YES to God and they both had some very painful times in their lives. Mary said, "Let it be done to me" and Joseph made every effort to protect his loved ones from harm. I'm sure that we too have had times when we said "yes" and later wondered how we could ever have had the courage to do that. When things become difficult, only trust in God's love and guidance will help us through it all.

With a single "yes", Mary conceived and brought forth the Redeemer of the world. Our vocation is the same as Mary's. By baptism, we are called to bring Christ into our world. To do this as Mary did, we must stand vulnerable before God and freely abandon all that we have been and are and ever will be. Total love is the only appropriate response to Total Love.
(Patricia McCarthy, CND The Scent of Jasmine, p. 40)

God has a special journey for each one of us and there will be many doubts and fears which will demand trusting love, courage, and total abandonment. BUT WE KNOW THAT GOD ALWAYS COMES THROUGH!

My first big "yes" as a missionary was accepting an appointment that came to me from our Congregational Leadership Team in Rome. I was alone on a plane, flying for 18 hours to a country which was entirely unfamiliar to me. There was no Sister there that I had ever known before and a ministry of hospital supervision in an unknown culture. God and I had many words on that trip. I have to admit that in my panic I probably had one of the most growth-producing experiences of my life. Just when my doubts and fears were at maximum capacity, I knew that God was with me. We never walk alone. In joys and sorrows, God is always with us. God can bring good out of everything. When we say "yes", we are trusting in God's unconditional love to energize and guide us. That was my lesson!

Today, there are many frightening and worrisome situations. As we journey through Advent and Christmas let us walk with Jesus, Mary and Joseph. There wasn't much that they didn't experience. Since Thanksgiving comes in there also, let's not forget to thank God for our growth-producing life journey.

Sr. Pat Gnider, SSps
Holy Spirit Missionary Association, Directress



During this Season of Thanksgiving and Christmas, we wish to express our special gratitude from your mission support that enabled us to complete some major construction and safety projects in our mission schools in St. Kitts (left: the installation of hurricane shutters that protect the terrace area of the school and provide an extended learning space and lunch area for the children in stormy weather) and in Jamaica (right: the reinforcement of the foundation of the original classroom structure). Thank YOU!

May God bless you!



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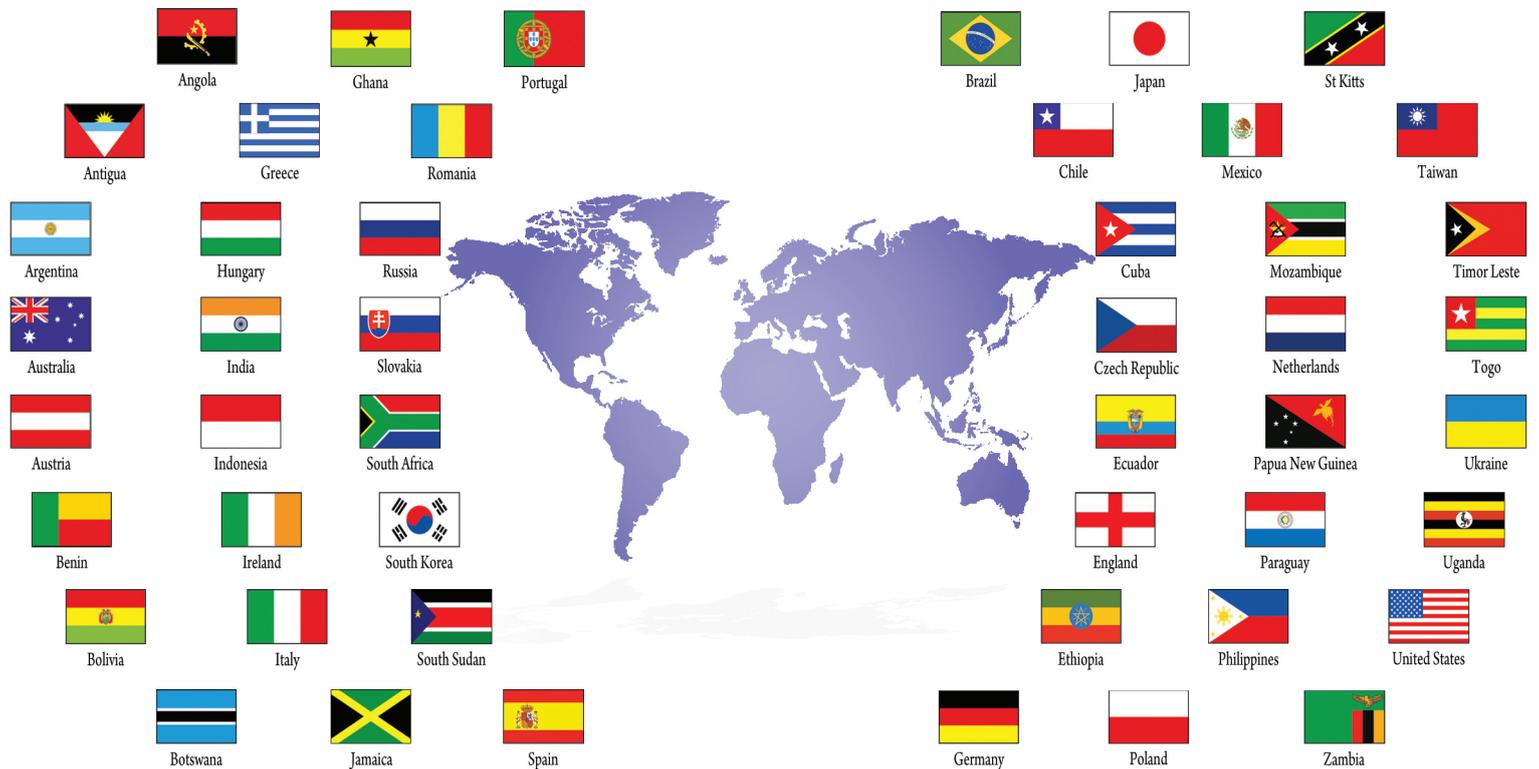


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