Please send your articles on or before 5th of January, March, May, July, September and November.

**JANUARY- FEBRUARY**
- Central South US
  - Peru
- Eastern Central Africa
  - (Kenya, Congo, South Sudan, Uganda)
- Italy-Malta
- North Mexico
- Indonesia

**MARCH- APRIL**
- West Africa (Senegal, Burkina Faso)
- New York-Toronto
- Europe-BFMN
  - (Belgium, France, Hungary, Netherlands)
- Southeast Latin America (Brazil, Paraguay)
- Great Britain
- Egypt-Sudan
- Ecuador
- Colombia-Venezuela and Cuba

**MAY- JUNE**
- Montreal, Canada
- Philippines-Japan
- Angola-Mozambique
- Central America
  - (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico)
- Argentina-Uruguay
- South Africa

**JULY- AUGUST**
- Mid-North America
- Lebanon-Syria
- West Mexico
- Australia/Aotearoa-NZ
- Eudist Family
- East Asia
  - (Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam)

**SEPTEMBER- OCTOBER**
- Bolivia-Chile
- Northeast Asia
  - (China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, South Korea)
- Germany-Albania
- The Isles (Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion)
- Portugal
- Austria-Switzerland-Czech Republic
- Singapore-Malaysia
- Spain

**NOVEMBER- DECEMBER**
- South West India
- Central East India-Nepal
- Ireland
- Sri Lanka-Pakistan

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Echoes from GSIF Office
Our chapter theme and logo invite us to deeper consciousness of God’s presence as the energy of Love at the heart of the Universe.

As we grow in awareness of this Love, we come to experience and reverence our fundamental interconnectedness to each other and to all created life.

Drawn by this Love, which spontaneously flows outward in zeal, we are impelled to be passionate for justice - to challenge the prevailing structures of injustice and to live in right relationship with humankind and all creation.
Transformative Communities

Integrating Culture, Collaboration and Community

From Community Works, INC Website

By Mark Clarke

… Transformative Communities have open hearts to listen intensely and reverently to the voices within and beyond, searching for truth. We live in a global echo chamber where we affirm some opinions and debase others. Eugene Cho in the book, Roadmap to Reconciliation, posits “If we’re not careful, it is quite possible and tempting to be more in love with the idea of reconciliation than to actually engage in the actual work of reconciliation – the arduous, painful and messy marathon work of reconciliation.” In these times, transformative communities model the benefits of engaging in such profound and deep soul work. The changes in our world call for this type of grief and resurrected integration.

The power of a transformative community balances the resurrection/transformation process with reconciliation/healing. We often focus on resurrection without realizing the importance of the need to be reconciled. The woman on the road to Emmaus, Thomas, and Peter speak to this process as they encounter Jesus post-resurrection. On the journey to Emmaus, they confront their loss, grief, and fear. Suddenly, the power of Jesus meets their lives as they experience the resurrected Christ. Peter, who denied Christ, is called through forgiveness to experience the resurrection. Thomas, the doubter, is invited to embrace his fears and touch the resurrected Christ. The power of communal discernment as it explores culture, collaboration, and community, is entering this together to reenergize and model the resurrected Christ in a world hungering for wholeness.

Summary: Winston Churchill stated, “Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.” His statement echoes the challenge of our times to persevere when solutions seem impossible. As we explore new vistas of change, it is imperative to have an integrated approach grounded in culture, collaboration, and being a transformative community. This foundational anchor allows religious congregations the ability to endure in the darkness and celebrate the blessings of God as the world slowly becomes transformed. As we experience both the darkness and light, the resurrection comes from the painstaking willingness to amend the culture, to build collaborative networks and to envision being a transformative community. Elizabeth Johnson says in her book, Creation and the Cross, “Aware of this let us give thanks to God with all our heart praising and proclaiming the ineffable height of divine compassion, which acts beyond our expectation in such astonishing ways, showing such exceeding love and tenderness toward us, toward all of us in the community of creation.”

*To continue the reading Click here*
Sister María Agustina Rivas: Sign of The Kingdom

Twenty-eight years have passed since a group of terrorists assassinated Aguchita and it has been two years since we initiated the process of her beatification. This allows us to review, look at and rediscover how God is revealed in the ordinariness of everyday life, as we reflect on Aguchita’s life, our personal and community realities, as well as our life as a province. In the same way, contemplating God who never tires of loving with tenderness, compassion, and mercy impels us to live our apostolic zeal in a creative way for today’s world.

When Pope Francis began his ministry as pastor of the church, he challenged us with the apostolic exhortation, Evangelii Gaudium, to live the joy of the Gospel: “Evangelize and go out to the margins,” an everyday practice in the life of Aguchita. Being in the margins gave witness to persons she accompanied in the formative process of empowerment. She was present with her total self: joyful, smiling, patient, welcoming and attentive to others’ needs. These characteristics are sign and seed of the Kingdom. So, is this a commemoration or an impetus for our journey?¹

Sign of Joy
It is an indisputable, authentic expression of the follower of Jesus. It is about sowing the seeds of joy, the joy of the gospel, by means of a happy life that spreads happiness and is more effective than many discourses, homilies, or catechesis.

Sign of an Ecological Conscience
The encyclical, Laudato Sí’, raises “the urgent challenge to protect our common home and includes the concern to unite the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change.”² In this sense, Aguchita loved nature and promoted recycling. The seminarians called her “Sister Lettuce” in reference to a photo that shows her carrying a head of lettuce. It was only a symbol of her conscious commitment to an integrated care of creation.

Sign of Attentive Listening to God and the Reality of Women
Today more than ever, we need to sharpen our hearing to the cries of women who are victims of gender-based violence and to be attentive to the high rates of femicide. This painful reality is becoming increasingly acute. We are on the tenth day of January 2019, and the lives of six women have ended. We ask ourselves, “What would be Aguchita’s reaction?” What would her life tell us today? We can respond with the words of Clare Nolan, RGS: “If the memory of Aguchita is of any value, may it serve as a model of a person who was inspired by the Gospel to respond to the needs of her time, the needs of the world that she experienced, as well as the needs that were revealed to her by others.”³

Therefore, Aguchita is for us a call that cries out that we can be saints in the little things of everyday life. Like her, holy women and men put their trust not in their qualifications but in God and look for God in prayer, find God in his Word, in creation, and in others, because all life is full of God. Aguchita became a saint through effort, perseverance, and sacrifice.⁴ Her martyrdom was not a coincidence and the external circumstances have least significance. Aguchita responded to the grace of God in the little things of everyday life. Like her, we are all called to be holy.⁵ For this we thank you, Aguchita, and ask you to continue encouraging us, making us happy, smiling and welcoming, the way you did so many things in your life.

¹Bloch E. osb “Aguchita, ¿Conmemoración o aguijón para nuestro caminar?”. Caminamos contigo Aguchita.
²Laudato Si’, Carta Encíclica N° 13.
³Nolan C.RGS, “Memoria y meditación: una reflexión personal”
⁴Tapia I., “Homilía del 26 de setiembre 2018” – Vicariato de San Ramón.
⁵Gaudate et Exsultate , Exhortación Apostólica sobre la Santidad N° 14 Papa Francisco.
Hospitality Ministry: Mutual Enrichment
The U.S. Central South Province Welcomes Sisters from Vietnam

By Sr. Donna Fruechey

In the summer of 2009, a Jesuit seminarian, (who is now a Jesuit priest) asked if the Sisters would give room and board to Vietnamese sisters while they attend English classes at the ESL (English as a Second Language) Institute at St. Norbert College, Wisconsin. With the permission of our Provincial, the Green Bay community agreed to support the sisters from Vietnam with free room and board while they attend the Institute to learn English. The duration of the sisters’ stay varies from a few months to about sixteen months, depending on their English proficiency and other factors. Sometime during language studies, the sisters apply for college scholarships. After completing classes at the Institute, they leave Green Bay to go to different areas in the United States.

Since August of 2009, our community has given hospitality to thirty Sisters from Vietnam. We started with two sisters living with us at a time. As the demand increased, we agreed to house four sisters at a time. At present, we have two sisters from the Dominican Congregation of Our Lady of the Rosary, Lang Son, Vietnam, and expect two more sisters from the same congregation for the spring or summer semester.

Overall, we have offered hospitality to eight different congregations since 2009:

⇒ Lovers of the Holy Cross – Hanoi
⇒ Lovers of the Holy Cross – Cai Nhu.
⇒ Society of Apostolic Life Incarnation Consecration Mission (I.C.M)
⇒ Dominican Sisters of Mary of the Immaculate Conception of Ba Ria Diocese
⇒ Lovers of the Holy Cross – Da Lat
⇒ Congregation of Missionary Sisters of the Holy Queen of Mary.
⇒ Lovers of the Holy Cross – Hung Hoa
⇒ Dominican Congregation of Our Lady of the Rosary – Lang Son.

I believe that this ministry has been a huge blessing for Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd Sisters in Green Bay. The relationship between the Vietnamese Sisters and our Sisters has always been mutually beneficial.
Serving God’s People
By Sr. Severiana Morales, RGS

Sr. Severiana Morales (RGS) with the lawyers from Pittsburgh and parishioners from St. Stephen’s Catholic Church in Erie, Pa.

My ministry with the Hispanic community has been both a challenge and a blessing for me. As the Pastoral Associate for the Parish of St. Stephen in Erie, Pennsylvania, I have many responsibilities. My ministry consists in coordinating the religious education program for the parish as well as guiding and preparing the catechists. I am responsible for the coordination of any activity or event in the parish. Some of my responsibilities include visiting the sick parishioners in different hospitals and accompanying people to medical appointments, as they may need support and an interpreter. My work varies; and each day, God provides an opportunity to serve our sisters and brothers in need.

During a workshop I attended in 2015, I met some attorneys from Pittsburgh who work pro bono with undocumented immigrants. I asked if they would be willing to help our parishioners legalize their immigration status. Their quick and spontaneous response surprised me. I could hardly believe it when they said, “Of course, Sister, we would love to help you. It would be a pleasure to do so!” Since then, they have been coming to Erie to help people seeking legal advice.

Working closely with undocumented immigrants has taught me about their fears and their stressful lives, especially the children. They fear going to foster homes or separation from their parents, as they have seen on television. It is heartbreaking to hear the children ask, “What will happen to our parents? To us?” I struggle to answer their questions.

Each morning I pray to God to send the Holy Spirit and give me the gift of wisdom and knowledge to find the right words, words of hope and encouragement to the parents and their children. My heart aches when I visit poor families. I see their pain, trauma, and the depression they carry with them. On the other hand, I cannot help but admire them for their strong faith, the only source of strength that keeps them going.

I am so grateful to God and to the attorneys who take time out of of their busy schedules to travel from Pittsburgh to Erie, a distance of more than 120 miles (more than 200 kilometers). They not only bring hope and but they also live our charism by helping people recognize and affirm their human dignity. May God continue to bless them and all who work for justice.
An Exposure to Anti-Human Trafficking Efforts

By Sr. Theresia Anita Yuniastuti, RGS

Human trafficking is a global issue that affects our country. As part of my learning, I had the opportunity to participate in the anti-human trafficking and national campaign in Thailand. Caritas Asia, in collaboration with Caritas Thailand, Good Shepherd Thailand, and other NGOs sponsored the event that took place on December 29-30, 2018. The government of Undontani Province welcomed us and discussed their strategies to prevent human trafficking on the local and national levels. The National Catholic Commission on Migration presented their initiatives to protect and help migrants respond to the challenges and problems they face, including human trafficking. After the program, we had an opportunity to visit the government shelter and to stay in Nongkhai.

Through the exposure, I learned the importance of collaboration in combating human trafficking. The presentations emphasized the importance of networking among government, non-government, and private sectors. Efforts against human trafficking will be more effective if all the stakeholders work together. It was great to experience the collaboration that brought about the successful anti-violence campaign rally in Nongkhai. The campaign involved many institutions and their cooperation resulted in a greater impact.

The government provides a web-based data system to manage and support the sharing of information related to trafficking cases. Increasing the punishment for trafficking crimes is another strategy used by the government to combat human trafficking. Recognizing the transnational nature of human trafficking, the government has broadened its partnerships with foreign governments, and with its neighboring countries, in particular. The different presentations highlighted the government’s serious commitment to the prevention of human trafficking and the protection of vulnerable individuals and groups.

The “witness preparation” program is an effective means of preparing victims to give testimony. Providing shelter addresses the many challenges and needs of survivors of trafficking. I was happy to learn many other aspects of anti-human trafficking efforts in Thailand, including witness protection, mentoring, and collaboration with airlines. The government has collaborated with airlines and tourism sectors to combat human trafficking by training hotel and airline staffs and showing videos to raise awareness of the signs of human trafficking.

As I assumed responsibility for the shelter for women and children, I was inspired to include the witness preparation activity. I recognize the importance of strong networking connections with the government and other NGOs and the need for creativity in our advocacy efforts. I am grateful for the learning opportunity and I hope our efforts will make a significant difference in the lives of survivors of human trafficking.
Celebrating God’s Love
50th Anniversary in Religious Life

Born on December 30, 1945 into a Muslim family, Sr. Martha Tukinah converted to Catholicism when she was eleven years old. After finishing her studies, Sister moved to another city to work at a Good Shepherd convent. In time, Sr. Martha learned about the mission of the Good Shepherd sisters and their life of total dedication to God as religious women. She began to be interested in becoming a religious and subsequently decided to join the Good Shepherd congregation.

Sr. Martha made her temporary profession on January 6, 1969 and her perpetual profession on January 6, 1976. During her fifty years in religious life, Sr. Martha Tukinah served in various ministries with girls and women, in pastoral ministry with factory workers, and in formation ministry as novice directress. Sister was also a pioneer and founded two Good Shepherd houses in Marau, Kalimantan and in Bantul, Yogyakarta.

She believes that Jesus, the Good Shepherd who called her, is The Great Shepherd who always leads her. God’s love enables her to be faithful to his call. The love of her sisters and friends is also a great support in carrying out the mission entrusted to her.

What Mother Foundress said, “I only have love but I loved with all my heart, with all my soul” is an expression of gratitude for Sr. Martha Tukinah for God’s love and fidelity.
There were 34 Pilgrims in our group:

24 **Sisters of the Good Shepherd** (from Central South US; Mid-North America and New York/Toronto Provinces); 6 **Sisters of St. Joseph**, Brentwood, NY (including Sr. Maria Pascuzzi, CSJ. Pilgrimage Director, whose deep Scriptural background and thorough understanding of Israel’s history, enriched us); 2 **family members of the Srs. of St. Joseph**: Kimberly Mailley (Sr. Maria’s assistant) and **Fr. David Gentry**, Chaplain. Three Israeli men were also integral to our pilgrimage: **Erad**, Professional Guide, who complemented Sr. Maria’s narrative, often noting, “It’s complicated”! when referring to Israel’s incredibly turbulent history. Yet, “resilience” also characterized Jesus’ ancestors (prior to and following His Life/Death/Resurrection), by surviving multiple destructions to eventually become the country we call: “The Holy Land”. **Stan**, a true “shepherd”, always anticipating help for anyone needing it and doing multiple “head counts” each time we boarded the bus! And **Gamel**, our skilled bus driver, navigating us through incredibly narrow roads with multiple curves as we ascended and descended mountainous/desert areas above and below sea-level!

**Communal Prayer** was a graced experience throughout. Each morning, after boarding the bus, we recited a prayer, with a reading etc. that set the tone for that day. Each evening, Sr. Maria shared a beautiful reflection on one of the Beatitudes, with Night Prayer following. This excerpt from one Morning Prayer captures the “heart” of our Pilgrimage: “These revelations and encounters that make a place holy are first of all encounters with God’s presence. The places where these encounters occur become holy places for us.”

From **Tues. Jan. 1st through Thurs. Jan. 3rd**, we stayed at the Franciscan Sisters’ Guest House on the Mount of the Beatitudes overlooking the Sea of Galilee. What a beautiful one-hour ride from the Tel Aviv airport to this place, as we rode along the Mediterranean Sea, stopping to view the ruins in Caesarea and a remarkable Roman Aqueduct that has survived the test of time. Since it was Israel’s rainy season, parts of the countryside were lush and green. But nothing prepared us for the incredible sight of the Mount of the Beatitudes stretching down to the Sea of Galilee!

During these days in the region of Galilee, we visited **Nazareth** - the magnificent **Basilica of the Annunciation** whose outside courtyard contained beautiful icons of Mary from many nations. We then viewed the lower level of excavations believed to be the place where the Holy Family lived during Jesus’ hidden life. Then, the simpler **Church of St. Joseph** with its 3 magnificent sanctuary paintings: The Angel awakening Joseph to tell him of Mary’s Annunciation; Mary and Joseph finding the 12-year-old “lost Jesus” in the Temple; Mary and Jesus with the dying Joseph.

We visited **Tabgha** (the site commemorating the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes). Then on to the **Church of the Primacy of Peter** right by the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus cooked breakfast for His apostles! There was also a magnificent statue of St. Peter, so powerful yet tender, holding the shepherd staff, with the Sea of Galilee in the background. But an outstanding experience still awaited us when we boarded a fishing boat and **sailed on the Sea of Galilee** for an hour! Sr. Maria read the Scriptural passage of Jesus asleep in the boat during the terrifying storm. We silently reflected on this Gospel passage, so aware were we to be in this holy place where Jesus once spent much time in ministry. For all of us, this event was a special highlight! We ended this day at **Migdal** (a newly excavated site associated with Mary Magdalen) and Fr. David celebrated the Liturgy in the beautiful new Boat House Chapel. The altar is incredible – shaped like a long boat and as we celebrated Mass we could view the Sea of Galilee through the clear, large window behind the altar!

**Fri. Jan. 4th through Tues. Jan. 8th we moved on to Jerusalem.** As we began this journey, we visited Mount Tabor-magnificent! The **Church of the Transfiguration** was so simple, yet beautiful in its own right. We spent quiet time contemplating the beauty of the mosaic of Jesus, Elijah and Moses, among
other beautiful aspects.

Later, traveling along the Jordan Valley, we stopped at the Jordan River to renew our Baptismal Vows in a beautifully simple ritual. We spent time by the Jordan River in quiet prayer, noticing how 15 years of drought has reduced its size dramatically. Yet, Jesus was in this very place as He anticipated the beginning of His ministry!

We proceeded to the Mount of Olives where we got our first glimpse of Jerusalem from the top of a mountain! Then, onward to the Church of Dominus Flevit (the site where Jesus wept over Jerusalem) where we celebrated Mass. Noteworthy, was the mosaic etched on the front of the altar depicting a Mother Hen gathering her young chicks under her wings!

We finally arrived in Jerusalem and checked in to our hotel, where we would remain for the duration of our pilgrimage.

On Saturday, we visited Bethlehem and toured Manger Square. Through a scheduling difficulty, we were unable to celebrate Mass in the Church of the Nativity but had to go to St. Helena’s Chapel. What a beautiful surprise! We were literally in a cave-like structure reminiscent of the place where the Infant Jesus lay. Needing to sit close together on stone benches around the wall of the “cave”, this Liturgical experience turned out to be a profound sense of community –inclusive of the world!

After Mass, we drove to Bethlehem University, sponsored by the LaSalle Christian Brothers. Although it was vacation time for the students, one of the Brothers met us and showed us their Chapel. The surrounding walls were covered with stone mosaics of boys and girls, from many countries, martyred over the centuries, with their names written on their head wreathes. This deeply moving sight brought tears to many eyes.

Brother then invited us to their conference room where we viewed a film on the Brothers’ ministry with Palestinian students over the past 50 years. Following this, was another highlight of our pilgrimage: Two young men and one young woman (current students) along with a female faculty member spoke of their present experience and challenges living on the West Bank. We were all so touched by their inner peace as they spoke of the difficult circumstances they were experiencing in their daily lives. A dialogue followed in which we asked their suggestions as to how we, as Americans, might help promote more independence for them. Although they are suffering through this oppression, they still maintain a sense of hope for the future.

That afternoon, we returned to Jerusalem where many walked along the Via Dolorosa, which covers the first nine Stations of the Cross outside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Others prayed these stations in solidarity with the group. As it turned out, so crowded was the road, that our group was unable to complete the last 5 stations in the Church. This was a very profound experience of what it was really like for Jesus, struggling to walk this way to Calvary!

On Sunday we visited the Garden of Gethsemane and Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Viewing the trees in this garden (with trunks dating back hundreds of years) this site, archeologically, is believed to be where Jesus spent His hours in agony. One could not help noticing the high mountain to the right that Jesus would have had to climb after his arrest.

Given the large crowds entering the Church to complete the final 5 Stations of the Cross, we decided to complete our remaining Stations in the Courtyard. Despite the heavy crowds surrounding us, we were able to do so reverently and peacefully.

Before entering the Church, we reverenced a replica of the Holy Sepulchre and peered down an excavation that extended to an incredible depth of many layers, supporting the fact that Jesus’ burial was close to this area. We attended Mass in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (actually a Chapel for Roman Catholic Pilgrims, as there were two others for the Greek Orthodox and Byzantine Christian Rites as well). Once again, Fr. David led us in a simple yet beautifully profound Liturgy.
In the afternoon, we traveled to the Israel Museum where we first viewed a scale model of Jerusalem dating back to how it was during Jesus’ time. Then, we viewed copies of the Dead Sea Scrolls and learned how they were initially discovered (22 out of 24 have been unearthed since 1947; only the Book of the Prophet Isaiah remains in its entirety!)

Monday, we first traveled to Ein Karem the scene of the Visitation. An exquisitely beautiful statue of Elizabeth greeting Mary stands on this site. We had Liturgy in the simple beauty of the Church of the Visitation and Sr. Maria’s reflection on the Gospel was so touching, referring to Mary’s anxious anticipation, given her own pregnancy and how Elizabeth and Zechariah (High Priest) might respond. Being in the actual physical locale that Mary had to travel, one could imagine her added challenge, given this long trip by foot and/or donkey!

Tuesday, we drove south of Jerusalem, through the Judean Desert, to view the caves in Qumran and to experience the ancient fortress of Massada, where hundreds of Israelites were trapped on the top of the mountain by the Roman army and eventually killed.

Then, driving further along the Dead Sea (a surprisingly beautiful blue color) we eventually arrived in a commercialized area used as a vacation spot for many people. After lunch, a number of Sisters went into the water – so filled with salt that they literally were kept afloat on their backs! Although known for intense heat at different times a year, we experienced very comfortable temperatures around 70 on that day. As a point of interest, Maria noted that there is no evidence that Jesus ever traveled to this area, although it is possible that John the Baptist might have.

Our return trip to Jerusalem was about an hour-and-a-half long, allowing some time for packing as we were scheduled to leave early the next morning for our return flight to the U.S.

That evening, we had a farewell supper in the roof-top restaurant at Notre Dame of Jerusalem.

The spirit of Mary Euphrasia’s favorite saying: “Gratitude is the memory of the heart” prevailed throughout, as we thanked everyone who made this pilgrimage the graced experience it was in so many ways! For all of us, the sacred memories of this “journey” will unfold for years to come and the Scriptures will have a whole new meaning from this time forward!

You servants of God, praise, praise the name of God!
Blessed be the name of God henceforth and forever!
From east to west, praised be the name of God! (Ps. 113)
A sister of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd lying on a park bench? We saw this at the Motherhouse in Angers. The topic of the one-week training course on the Mission Statement was “Get off the couch!” Forty employees and Mission Partners of the province of Germany/Albania from houses in Münster, Munich, Wittlich and Zinneberg attended the training from October 24-31, 2018. The preparatory team from Zinneberg, together with Sr. Christophora Eckl, offered a real outburst of creativity to the participants. The motto of the province for the Jubilee Year (the 150th anniversary of the death of St. Mary Euphrasia) was “M.E.hrwert” * or, “Live and experience added value across borders.” Thus, the time spent in the footsteps of the foundress of the congregation became a unique, lasting experience of added value.

What similarities exist between the topic, “Get off the couch!” (which happens to be an actual slogan of a German event planner), and the German group following in the footsteps of St. Mary Euphrasia? Is there any link between the so-called "event planners" and the up-to-date guiding principles of St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier? According to Sr. Christophora, event planners are booming in our society. They offer people experiences on various occasions. Some are spectacular like “having breakfast with a tiger” and others are ordinary adventures, like a short trip with one’s best friend. What is important for the consumers is to get a kick out of these offers. Whether it makes sense or not, and whether it is somewhat ridiculous or crazy remains an open question.

The Mission Statement team questioned the search for meaning through what they called an "arena of experience” that focused on urgent questions about real added value in life to reach a fulfilled life. Of course, during the construction of this arena, St. Maria Euphrasia was always present as “godmother” and she had the central role from the very beginning.

After the participants of the conference had started to "get off the couch," creative impulses and guidance motivated them to exchange ideas. They carried green event bags marked with “Life Value” and sometimes wore colorful hats. They dedicated each day to a different aspect of the Mission Statement.
At the "Magic" Show on Day 2, the reflections focused on the topics "God as a friend of life" and "The essential traits of the Good Shepherd."

The impressive day trip to the Island of Noirmoutier took place on the third day as the group considered the topic “Action for the salvation of people.” The event motto, “Escape Room,” was appropriate. Sr. Christophora explained, “Mary Euphrasia always wanted to "look into the inner depths of people, and let them learn to look into themselves in order to discover their unique dignity, the wonderful treasure of their own dignity."

The vision of Mary Euphrasia was well illustrated, from the sublime down to the factual. Sometimes it was funny but it was always creative. Moreover, the concerns of the Foundress of the congregation remained in focus.

Photo: Wolfgang Brandt

The tunnel, built by Mary Euphrasia in 1855 became a focal point. For many, this experience was a profound encounter with themselves. Perhaps it was the emotional highlight of the conference for some.

Experiences such as these, cooperation with and exchange between colleagues from other houses of the province and, above all, the intense and sustained discussions on the thoughts of Mary Euphrasia made this Mission Statement training unique. The Motherhouse in Angers, this powerful place, did the rest.

The Mission Statement training, or one with a similar format, is certainly a possible answer to the question of how to keep the principles of the foundress of the congregation alive for the future. This question is becoming increasingly important with the growing number of lay partners taking on more and more responsibilities. We must live out the vision of Mary Euphrasia in order to keep the mission alive today.

Who would dare walk down a staircase in the middle of Angers with their heads held high wearing colorful hats? The participants of the Mission Statement training 2018 with a brave attitude and wearing hats that symbolize the protection of the institutions of the Good Shepherd Sisters! They found courage at the Motherhouse, the spiritual event location of the sisters.

Photos: Wolfgang Brandt

*Mehrwert = added value – written M.E.hrwert, referring to Mary Euphrasia, is a play on words in German which cannot be translated.
Panel One will present a faith-based framing of financing for sustainable development, including the moral foundations for an Economy of Life that incorporates peace, justice and sustainability.

It is an honour to be present with such distinguished panelists this morning, reflecting on “Faith-based Perspectives and Moral Imperatives that underpin an Economy of Life,” which in turn can frame and inform policy on ‘Financing for Sustainable Development.’

I am a Good Shepherd Sister – and a scripture passage that informs my life is the verse from St John’s Gospel, Chapter 10, verse 10 where Jesus references himself as the Good Shepherd who cares for the people: “The thief comes only to kill, steal and destroy. I have come that they (the people) may have life and have it to the full.” I believe that this scripture passage challenges our consciences to call a halt to the financial systems that facilitate the unbridled pursuit of wealth for the few, by the few, and to the detriment of billions worldwide. We must work together to ensure that every person has access to an economy of life for her or his wellbeing, as well as that of the family, local community, country and the world.

While people of many faiths and belief systems are engaged in promoting ‘an economy of life’ we are at some distance from achieving this based on information recently released in two documents. The first, by Oxfam, is entitled “Public Good or Private Wealth,” and the second report is from the Global Commission on the Future of Work, published by the International Labour Organization, who are celebrating their centenary (1919 – 2019). Both reports highlight the extremes of wealth and concurrent growing inequality. It is to the people excluded and living in extreme poverty that Good Shepherd Sisters and all of you faith-informed sisters and brothers seek to accompany, working to alleviate their suffering, while challenging the unethical dimensions of the financial markets, financial institutions and an unscrupulous corporate sector.

We can find very clear criteria in Catholic Social teaching for the ‘appropriate regulation of the dynamics of the markets’[1] These principles include:

- Human Dignity
- Community and the Common Good
- Option for the poor, and
- Stewardship of creation among others.

The disparity between the accumulation of extreme wealth and the inescapability of extreme poverty offends the dignity of human beings, is an affront to the common good, and tends toward disastrous cyclical misery. Extreme amassment of wealth and refusal to share resources and material goods are both cause and effect of social and spiritual ills.[2] Catholic social teaching has impelled us to transform faith into action for generations, and today is no exception. We remember the 1891 encyclical ‘Rerum Navarum,’ which translates to ‘Of New Things,’ on the rights and duties of Capital and Labour. (Did this influence the start of ILO in 1919?) to 2015 when Pope Frances published ‘Laudato Si,’ on ‘Care for our Common Home,’ outlining the destructiveness of the unregulated global economy. I quote, “When nature is viewed solely as a source of profit and gain, this has serious consequences for society. This vision of “might is right” has engendered immense inequality, injustice and acts of violence against the majority of humanity, since all resources end up in the hands of the first comer, or the most powerful: the winner takes all.” [3]
Catholic social teaching underscores the need for ethical and moral ‘boundaries’ around unfettered economic and financial markets, abetted by a phenomenal growth in technology, which if left unregulated, poses grave dangers to human dignity, community, world equilibrium, peace and solidarity. We need a strong ethic of solidarity, embracing the logic of the common good and the common dignity of all people.[4] Commitment to the common good affects not only relationships between individuals but also macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones.[5] Pope Francis in ‘Laudato Si’ reiterates, and I quote, “Today, with a view towards the common good, there is urgent need for politics and economics to enter into a frank dialogue in the service of life, especially human life.”[6] 

*Laudato Si* goes beyond standard critiques of capitalism to recognize that the market economy is merely the latest, manifestation of a worldview that puts the production and consumption of material objects at the center of human purpose. Corporations engaged in land-grabbing and resource-extraction for short-term private profit harms and impoverishes already-struggling people, leading to violence, poverty and displacement.

A recent document from the Vatican entitled *Considerations for an ethical discernment regarding some aspect of the present economic-financial system* ruminates on why the recent financial crisis did not ‘provide the occasion to develop a new economy, more attentive to ethical principles and a new regulation of financial activities that would neutralize predatory and speculative tendencies and acknowledge the value of the actual economy.’[7]

All institutions, - including the G7, the G20, the Bretton Woods Institutions and corporate sectors - that prioritize profit over people need to be challenged.

For me, the United Nations is a ‘Gospel Space,’ and the United Nations’ concern with Financing for Sustainable Development is a faith-informed project embedded in a global institution that is informed at its core by values and principles, including human rights and sustainable development. Finance is a human rights issue; it is a matter of life and death for the millions who struggle for food, water, shelter, energy and other basic necessities. To achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its ambition to “leave no one behind,” we must put our faith into action, and call on governments to make greater efforts to ensure tax justice, invest in social protection, green energy, and gender equality, reduce military expenditures, stop illicit financial flows, end the burden of debt, and ensure that those who have been marginalized can enjoy full and meaningful political participation, uncorrupted by economic power.

Faith-based organizations promoting human dignity and the common good must never cease applying their principles within ever-changing economic and political milieus. ‘Laudato Si’ recognizes the complexity of interdependence of the economy, society and the natural world. Catholic social teaching provides an ethical framework against which to evaluate human action and challenge the international financial structures that reduce nature and humans to mere objects in a cost-benefit calculation. Instead, we must address financing for sustainable development in a rights-based, people-centered way so as to uphold the dignity and wellbeing of people and our planet.

Text of Winifred Doherty on ethical finances UN

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[1] Considerations for an ethical discernment regarding some aspect of the present economic-financial system” of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development , 17.05.2018 (Oeconomicae et pecuniariae quaestiones)
[3] [Laudato Si, page 22]
[5] Considerations for an ethical discernment regarding some aspect of the present economic-financial system” of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development , 17.05.2018 (Oeconomicae et pecuniariae quaestiones)
[6] Laudato Si
[7] Ibid.
The Good Shepherd International Foundation (GSIF) has been awarded “High-Performing Non Profit” by the lead European philanthropic advisor Lang Foundation. The prestigious prize has been received by Cristina Duranti, director of GSIF, last October in Milan (Italy) at VI Edition of Philantrophy Day 2018 as a recognition for the commitment of GSIF to implement a strategic approach to development and to building capacity in outcome oriented project management.

The Philantrophy Awards Committee of Lang Foundation commented that “in particular, we believe that the extraordinary commitment and the tension to continuous improvement expressed by the leadership organization (of GSIF); the great attention to the quality of the design results oriented and participated with internal and external stakeholders through the tool of the Theory of Change and the investment on organizational capacity, particularly challenging in a reality branched and faith-based, they summarize a model of great inspiration for the audience in terms of long-term vision and tenacity in the achievement of its mission“.

This award is a great achievement for all the Good Shepherd sisters and mission partners who strive to ensure continuous improvement is support of the mission across the world to ultimately deliver the best services to girls, women and children living in poverty, victims or exploitation and other violation of their dignity and human rights.

Towards greater collaboration and mission effectiveness in Asia Pacific and Latin America

The two first Good Shepherd International Foundation (GSIF) Regional meetings were held in Asia Pacific and Latin America last year, to share experiences from GS Units and local MDO’s and explore new areas of cooperation for more effective mission development at regional level.

The regional meeting of 32 representatives from Good Shepherd Units across Asia Pacific was held in October at Serene Pastures, Colombo, Sri Lanka. This first meeting brought together Asia Pacific Partners in mission to learn more about the work of GSIF, and GSIF had the opportunity to introduce its work to the Units of Asia Pacific for greater collaboration and mission effectiveness.
Along with Cristina Duranti, director of GSIF and two GSIF Board members attended, Patricia Marshall and Hubert Janssen. In Quito, Ecuador, the GSIF Regional Workshop took place in November 2018, involving 33 participants from GS Units of Latin America (LA), GSIF board members (President Elaine Basinger and Paulette Lo Monaco) and GSIF staff from Rome. The LA meeting aimed to review and consolidate the regional strategic plan and to promote stronger cooperation to identify and develop best practices in ministries, sharing experiences and models of intervention from the different LA countries. This sharing will continue and will be further consolidated through a regional network of newly created Communities of Practices, which will be animated by the Regional MDO on the new e-leaning platform ProLea.

All participants left the meetings re-energized and appreciating a strong sense of collaboration and connection, and with a clearer understanding of the role of GSIF and the MDOs in Asia Pacific and Latin America.
Good Shepherd Newsletter

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