

Ursuline Sisters, Congregation of Tildonk



E-News - July 2015

From Congregation Leadership

The Pope in New York

Promoting a prosperous future for all.

There's a buzz in New York these days. Anticipation is high as the date for the visit of Pope Francis to the UN to address the General Assembly on Sept 25 approaches.

Preceding his visit to the US, Pope Francis will issue a papal encyclical on climate change and ecology. In a year of unparalleled importance for climate change because of key UN meetings in Paris this December, he will increase the attention paid to climate change and the environment.

It may seem surprising to some to learn that the Pope will join his voice with the UN which has shown leadership on climate change for the past 20 years. With the encyclical, care of our environment will have a prominent place on the church's agenda for the foreseeable future. The encyclical will not only address the science behind climate change but also the many moral issues behind it

Examining this relationship between God and Creation is at the core of a developed Christian *ecothology*, or theology of creation. *Earthkeeping* is a term being used to describe the nature of our responsibility to care for creation. It springs from our wonder, awe, and gratitude for God's wisdom, creativity, and blessings that fill the natural world.

These are the themes that Pope Francis can be expected to share in his encyclical.

The earth is a gift from God and reflects a divinely ordained beauty and order.

Human beings must act as the stewards and protectors of this order.

The poor and excluded suffer the worst effects of pollution and climate change.

Linking nature's destruction with greed.

Pollution as Structural Sin

St. Francis stressed the importance of protecting our earth home many years ago, and Father Thomas Berry C.P., historian and ecologist, continues the same theme: "There is no such

thing as 'human community' without the earth and the soil and the air and the water and all the living forms. Without these, humans do not exist."

The Pope has already spoken of some of "the evils that tear man from the land of his birth." In his words: "Climate change, the loss of biodiversity and deforestation are already showing their devastating effects in the great cataclysms we witness."

We often wonder what we can do to protect our earth. We can initiate, support and take part in the efforts of individuals, organizations and governments to take steps to protect our environment. As a starter, we can plant a garden, and work with others to create places of beauty. Then when the garden is in full bloom we can sit and read the Pope's encyclical!

Announcement:

The Province Chapter of the Belgian Province did not take place on June 10 -12, 2015 due to the sudden passing away of Sr. Ann Cuppens. It has been postponed to May 2016. Please continue to pray for our sisters in the Belgian Province as they grieve their loss and continue to journey with courage and hope, trusting in God.

Sisters Bimla Minj and Bernadette Mwavita will visit the Sisters in the Vice Province of Congo in July - August 2015. May God accompany them during their visitation.

Belgium Province

LIVING IN FLOORDAM : 14 sisters live in our community. They have come from several communities in Belgium and from the Congo where they worked as missionaries. They have all come here to be taken good care of.

There is always something going on in Floordam. We have Mass every day in our chapel. The sisters from Home Merici come to celebrate with us. Sometimes the sisters from different communities pay a visit to the sisters, especially on special occasions or birthdays.



Sisters from Floordam for Prayer

Lus, the physical therapist, comes weekly to do gymnastics with all the sisters. They do their movement exercises in circle keeping the rhythm of the music. Sisters do it very enthusiastically.



A fine hairdo of Sr. Jozefa

Every fortnight the hairdresser visits to give the sisters a fine hairdo.

The dedicated pedicure cares for their feet. Sister Rosa Grullinx always awaits the lady eagerly because she really enjoys the treatment.

Another interesting activity in Floordam is when sisters come every month from different houses to visit our sisters and give a special treat. Sisters are very happy to meet with each other and are grateful for their loving concern.

Every year in April, the Royal Greenhouse in Laken is opened for the public. On April 28, patients/people with wheel chairs



are invited to visit the garden. We had the opportunity to bring our eight sisters from Floordam with the support of the director of Floordam.

It was a very lovely day. Some of our sisters and friends helped our sisters with the wheel chairs. We were also helped by the volunteers assigned to push the wheel chairs. Our sisters enjoyed the beauty of the spring flowers. There were many young volunteers wearing special jackets so that people could easily identify them for help if needed. Sometimes they came to our sisters to help with the wheel chair.



Sr. Nirmala with Sr. Ursule in wheel chair



Sr. Celestina with Sr. Jozefa and Sr. Bernadette with Sr. Maria De Kinder



Seeing the marvelous flowers, the sisters were full of wonder, even some of them who are rather quiet started talking. We heard them whispering, "Oh ! how beautiful the colours are! Look at the beautiful design of the flowers."

After spending two hours in the beautiful garden our sisters forget their tiredness, anxiety and loneliness. They wanted to spend more time in the garden, but as they say, good things don't last forever, so it was time to return home. We helped to put them in the bus and were back home on time for supper. For all of us, it was really a day to be thankful for the beauty and success of the outing.



Sr. Jyoti with Sr. Leonarda, Sr. Lilima with Sr. Jozefa and Sr. Felicite

Making plans to take our sisters for an outing has really worked. We wanted to offer them a change and give them happiness, so they could enjoy the world outside the Floordam.

We realize how important it is to give time and show the old and sick people loving concern in little things. This can bring happiness in their helplessness. Thanks to the volunteers because without them this special trip would not have been possible.

Gumla Province

Juniors' get together

Our joy had no bound when the day arrived to gather in U. C. Samtoli for juniors' get together. With great longing to meet and to share the life experiences to the companions 44 junior sisters gathered in Samtoli from far and near. All carried with them great expectations

to renew, to learn and to strengthen our vocation from this course. On the year of consecrated life we were privileged to reflect upon our consecrated life. 29th evening this course was inaugurated by the Provincial Sr. Maria S. Kujur with the powerful and inspiring sentence 'Happiness cannot be bought or sold, it comes from within'. This will happen when we keep a positive attitude towards persons, situations or surroundings. She also gave us the seven points to be happy. We begin the day with body dynamic and meditation every day. The 1st two days our directresses explained our existence and our role in the consecrated life by quiz and film 'Nun's Story'. Questions related to the vows were discussed by six groups. Through discussions, skits and meditations we could measure levels of vowed life. To speak on consecrated life we had two very efficient, experienced, energetic and zealous resource persons- Sr. Marina Ekka and Fr. Bruno Toppo s.j. Sr. Marina spoke on vowed life related to the life of our Models- Jesus, Mother Mary, St. Angela and Fr. John Lambertz. We had self-discovery. We discovered and accepted with humility our goodness and weakness. Also she mentioned the four devils that are the speed breaker of our religious life-Fear, Hatred, Inferiority Complex and Guilt Feeling. Fr. Bruno spoke in the light of Pope Francis' messages and from his life experiences he spoke of the meaning to consecrated life. He greatly challenged us to be effective and energetic in this challenged world. The values of the world and the values of Jesus make us aware of who I am supposed to be in religious life, as well as how to become aware of how I should get deeply rooted in prayer for mission.

Sr. Parmita Tirkey

Ranchi Province

Triple Jubilee in Andamans

11th April 2015 was a day of joy and gratitude for us the Ursulines, for 25 years of our presence in Andamans and Nicobar Islands, 25 years of Sr. Kiran Kiro's service over there and 22 years of religious life of Sr. Sushila Minj. We, 23 Ursulines from Ambikapur, Gumla and Ranchi including Wimberlyganj and Hutbay Communities with 2 candidates were



Sr. Sushila Minj and Sr. Kiran Kiro

present to celebrate this important jubilee. Solemn Jubilee Mass was presided over by Rt. Rev. Bishop Alex Dias SfX together with 10 priests. St. Francis Xavier Church Wimberlyganj was full. The faithful remained with us sisters rejoicing the whole day. Bishop appreciated the tireless effort of the Ursulines to build up the Church over there through faith formation in spite of various challenges and problems. He also exhorted us by quoting the saying of Pope Francis - "Be grateful for the past, rejoice in the present and look with hope to the future."

There was a short felicitation after the Mass, then all enjoyed the festive meal. We were delighted to see the unity and joy of the people in Akara dance, Parish Priest himself was leading the group.

Sr. Mariana Ekka had tremendous joy and satisfaction of seeing the mission from its infancy to its youthfulness as she was the Provincial then and started the mission. We had also a good time with our sisters' families. It was a wonderful and thrilling experience for some of us as we went to Hut Bay by boat for six hours. We visited people and places affected by the Tsunami; big fallen trees are reminders of the disaster of 26 Dec. 2011.

We remain grateful to Wimberlyganj and Hut Bay Communities for warm welcome and hospitality shown to us. May Our Loving God guide us to spread His Mission among His people in other Islands, too.

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Sr. Dorothea Kullu osu

Province Day 2015

Ranchi Province had Province Day celebration on 6th and 7th June 2015 at Ursuline Convent Mother House. The Theme of the Province Day was "Live Contemplative Spirituality for Mission Today". About 210 sisters including the novices participated in the programme. On 6th June, Saturday, the programme began at 9.30 a.m. with a very meaningful and inspiring prayer service based on the theme. It was led by Sr. Helen Bara. Thereafter Sr. Suchita Shalini_Xalxo, the Province Leader along with her councillors extended a warm welcome to all the sisters present in the assembly.



Sr. Suchita addresses the sisters at Province day

In her inaugural talk she invited the sisters in the words of Pope Francis to rejoice and to wake up the world. She challenged them to wake up and respond to the needs of time promptly

and daringly. Through power point presentation she shared the outcome of the Extended Council Meeting of 2015. It was very much appreciated by all. She gave the detailed information about the planning for Bi- centenary of the Foundation Day of the Ursuline Congregation of Tildonk in Belgium. At different times, the Councillors through power point presentation gave a brief report of the work and achievements of their respective commissions. In a short time many achievements have been realized. Well done! Congrats! There was group sharing and reporting on the following questions.



Sisters at the Session

1. How are we living out the 2014 General Chapter Direction Statements?
2. How does our life and ministry reflect the face of God to others?
3. What do we want to do in the coming one year?

The evening cultural programme of 6th June was something unique. All the sisters according to their Diocesan groups presented their very creative and colourful items. It was fantastic. All laughed into tears.



Evening cultural programme

In the last session, 7th June there was time for open discussion and evaluation. The spontaneous and active participation of the sisters was very



Novices and Sisters during Eucharistic celebration

pleasing and encouraging. The amazing team spirit among the sisters pervaded throughout the programme. Everyone enjoyed the atmosphere of openness, love and communion. Congratulation and thanks to each and all for making this province gathering a joy-filled and memorable one. All dispersed to their respective ministries with renewed joy and enthusiasm to further the Mission.

Prayer for our Sick Sisters;

Please remember in your prayers our Sisters who are suffering from serious illnesses at this time ;

Sr. Judith Tirky (Gumla)

Sr. Saroj Soreng (Ranchi)

Sr. Victoria Lakra (Ranchi)

Sr. Sylvie Sendegeya(Congo)

Sr. Hillaria Ekka (Ambikapur)

and those who are suffering in any way.

In Loving Memory.....

Sister Mary John O'Rourke, OSU



Sister Mary John O'Rourke died peacefully at St. Ursula Center, Blue Point, on Friday May 22 after a long illness. She was born in Ozone Park, NY in 1937 and entered the Ursuline Sisters in Blue Point, New York in 1954. She held degrees in History, Education, and Theology.

Sr. Mary John was an exceptional Catholic School principal of St. Gregory the Great School Danbury, Connecticut for 22 years, and a leader in the Bridgeport Diocese. Sr. Mary John touched the lives of hundreds of children over the years, both as teacher and administrator. She left an indelible mark on the parents and faculty of St. Gregory the Great School, who feel the loss of their beloved principal.

Many tributes were written and spoken in her honor during the wake held at St. Gregory Church on May 28th. The wake was followed by a Funeral Mass attended by an overwhelming crowd of Sisters, friends, families and Diocesan representatives. A reception afterwards gave people time to gather in her memory in a gym dedicated in her honor.

The following day a Mass and burial was held in Blue Point where internment took place in the community cemetery at St. Ursula Center. Sisters, Associates, family and friends prayed for her as they accompanied her to her final resting place in procession.

Sister will be remembered for her optimism and positive spirit. In a recent St. Gregory's School Yearbook she wrote: "Tomorrow is waiting for dreams to be dreamed, goals to be reached. Tomorrow is for you. Let your dreams take you from possibility to reality, from hope to fulfillment. Remember, the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams. The world counts on you to open up new possibilities and to discover new ways. Believe in your destiny, and reach your potential."

Sr. Ann Cuppens OSU



God's ways are not our ways: The 23rd May, 2015, the eve of Pentecost was a sad day for the sisters of Belgium and for the whole Congregation. Sr. Ann Cuppens, the then Provincial Superior passed away from a car accident. The news spread like wild fire all over Belgium through radio, television and internet. All felt sad and at the same time sympathy for the sisters and family members.

On 29th May, a beautiful and inspiring prayer service was arranged in the Basilica of Scherpenheuvel. A large number of people came to pray for her.

On May 30th the burial Mass took place in the same Basilica. During Mass a representative of Belgium, India, Canada USA, Congo, Ursulines of the Roman Union from England, the Ursulines of Waver and the Ursulines of Hasselt paid their respects to Sr. Ann by placing a white rose on the coffin. The Indian and Congolese sisters expressed their gratitude by singing Hindi and Swahili songs. With gratitude the song of Mary's Magnificat was sung before her mortal remains were laid in the graveyard. All the sisters, family members, friends and parishioners paid their last respects and bid farewell to Sr. Ann with heavy hearts and tears.

Sr. Ann was the youngest sister in the Province. She lived her gifts of love, joy, kindness, loving caring, compassion, simplicity and generosity as she took care of the sisters. Her life reminds us of Jesus' saying. "I have come that they may have life, life in abundance." Sr. Ann gave her abundant life to the province, her family and the people wherever she served. With great love and gratitude we pay our respects to her. May her soul rest in peace.

She has left a remarkable legacy to the Congregation by sharing in writing her wisdom and deep spirituality of the founder Fr. John Lambertz. Whenever we read her reflections we will cherish her memory and go deeper in the spirituality of our founder. May her spirit guide us and inspire us to accomplish God's mission and live in the present moment.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who encouraged us, supported us and strengthened us through prayers, words of condolence and sympathy.

The sisters in the Belgian Province are grateful for your prayers and support at this great loss. We continue to pray for our sisters in Belgium to help them overcome their pain and sadness.

A special addition of Sr. Ann's life will follow next month.