

Ursuline Sisters, Congregation of Tildonk



E-News - February 2016

Remembering John Lambertz

We remember February 8, 1785 as the birthday of Jean Lambertz. He was born in Hoogstraeten which was a small town at the time of his birth. He was the 7th of 8 children. His mother instilled in him strong values for life which he later shared with his young communities: "Be an example to all, be mild, be peaceful, be patient, be honest, be in peace, and at the service of all."

Letter to Venray January 12, 1866.

For the Feast of the Magi 1864 he wrote to the Sisters: "I beg you, by the mercy of Jesus, who has appeared to us, start the New Year with great and full ardor. Once more declare war on the old self, on egoism; with courage, strive together to put on the new self who is Jesus."

Letter to Sittard.

From Congregation Leadership Team

During the Octave of Christmas the CLT spent time with the Sisters in the Ternat, Melsbroek, Home Merici and Floordam communities. Well wishes were mingled with Christmas carols, and light refreshments. It was a time to give and receive the joy of the Christmas Season.



Srs. Paula, Leonarda, Ursule De Cat, Myriam, Jozefa, Bimla Minj

Visit to India

From January 15 to Feb 21, Sisters Bernadette and Jane will visit three Provinces in India, Ranchi, Gumla and Ambikapur. They will have time to be enriched by the ministries of the Sisters. Each Province will have time together to participate in a Day of Reflection guided by the two Sisters. The theme is Saint Marie of the Incarnation, a valiant Ursuline missioner and foundress.

Expression of Appreciation

The Generalate community is grateful for the prayers, blessings and cards received during the Christmas Season. Your gestures of kindness has meant a lot to us and helps strengthen our unity across the globe. We enjoyed the holidays and are now ready to embark on the tasks for the New Year. We count on your prayers and support throughout 2016 and beyond as we continue in the Congregational ministry of service.

Sisters Bimla, Jane, Nirmala, Bernadette, Jyoti

From the Belgian Province

Solidarity with the DR Congo

The Sisters of the Ternat community have been supporting the work of the Sisters in the DR Congo for many years by making and selling individual designed cards for special holidays and celebrations. The dedication and love they put into each card unites them to the work in the Congregation and gives them great joy.



Srs. Bimla, Gabriel De Prins, Josée Proost

The financial aid they give to the Congo is noteworthy and supports projects of various kinds.

Without leaving their convent home, they are helping to spread the gospel and helping the development efforts of the Sisters in North Kivu, Katanga and Kindu regions.

The parishioners and others who purchase the cards appreciate the fine artistic work and love that goes into each card. This shows a real interest and respect for the work of our Sisters. Truly this is a mission minded parish.

The Saint Angela School, once under the direction of the Ursulines, holds an annual walk-a-thon and the young children contribute the proceeds to the Congo. This is an example of children helping children.

Prison Chaplain

Since 2007 I have been active in prison ministry. In Merksplas I volunteer one day a week. It is a prison with about 620 men, of which 300 inmates are serving a sentence from 3 to 7 years.

In addition, there are 324 interneees (those who received no sentence, but were imposed a measure by court because they were found mentally incompetent for the acts they had committed.) They have been sentenced to 9999 years and are under the supervision of a Commission for the Protection of Society (CBM). They can go to the commission every 6 months for a reevaluation. Some of them have been there already for 20 to 25 years. I mostly visit interneees in Merksplas.

In 2002 I was appointed as a part-time Catholic chaplain in the prison in Turnhout. This is mainly an arrest house. (Men are being detained there as suspects until they have to appear in court.) In addition, there are convicts serving a rather short sentence. 124 interneees also stay there, and since last year more and more men with a psychosis have arrived.

A prison detention is a confining condition for the inmates. It is a very extreme life situation which spontaneously makes the detainee reflect on his life and the meaning of it all, and that is the area in which we receive regular training as pastors. It gets to the heart of the pastoral work. In detention many detainees are beginning to question their lives, what they have made of it up to now, and the often dramatic situation in which they have ended up. Having the possibility to talk about it seems very important to me. They can contact us for an individual conversation. As a chaplain I listen without judging, which does not mean that I do not dare to hold a mirror to them and make them reflect about themselves and their actions.

As a chaplain, I always try to get the good out of people and help them become aware of their own inner strength. It happens on occasion that we are witnesses of how they deal with the facts of their life, especially the heavy facts. I think that talking about their acts, about guilt, about what the facts have done to their lives

is much easier with the chaplain, who will not report it to anyone. Being able to talk about it in a context that they have experienced as non-threatening, with someone chosen by the detainee himself and a person in which he has confidence, is crucial.

To whom can a prisoner in jail give his full confidence? To whom does he dare to expose his soul on issues often relating to very traumatic events? Giving the facts a place in his life, can nevertheless have a strong impact on his future.

Every week we celebrate Eucharist or a Communion service. It gives us the opportunity to speak a little more in detail about our Christian message and values, which does not always happen or is not always possible during the individual conversations. The individual conversations and the celebrations are complementary. Praying the rosary is also popular, it gives them something to hold on to and gives them confidence. This prayer instills trust in them that they might manage to stay on the right path. Sometimes it is replacing the presence of a loved one; often a grandmother or grandfather who passed away and was religious.

Another activity is the choir. Once a month we get together in the chapel from 18h to 20h to sing all together, and have a cup of coffee. It is always a pleasant event for us and for them.

It also happens that I accompany someone who is not allowed to leave the institution all alone for an exit permission, to visit someone who is sick or a parent who cannot come to visit.

Some of the men I visit are having a very hard time and are in a hopeless situation, so I ask a prayer for them, as a support for them and for me.

Sr. Lea Cools

From the DRC



Sr. Espérance Hamuli

We were airlifted by the UN because the route from Masisi to Goma was impassable due to heavy rain and mudslides. The security is better for the moment. The main problem facing us is helping the people heal their wounds and overcome extreme poverty resulting from the war.

Sister Esperance

US Province

Many volunteers and friends participated in the 2015 Holiday Craft Fair for the benefit of the retired Sisters. It was so encouraging to see the support given by all who appreciate the lives of the Sisters.



Sister Edith Menegus on left with a volunteer from Blue Point



Sister Alice Traynor on right with a volunteer from Blue Point.

News from Tezpur Province

New House

We feel proud that we have one more house to serve the poor. It is the second house in Raiganj Diocese. We were solemnly welcomed by the Bishop of Raiganj Rt. Rev. Alphonsus D'Souza along with a few priests, catechists, and the parishioners on December 19, at Mahinagar parish near Ballurghat in the diocese of Raiganj. The Bishop cut the ribbon and blessed the house in the presence of the people and Ursuline Sisters who had gathered there from different communities.



The convent building in Raiganj

First Profession

December 8th was a beautiful occasion- a true witness of a grace filled day. Our seven novices were excitingly waiting for the day. They had a prayerful preparation of eight days' retreat. We had a solemn Eucharistic Celebration presided over by our Bishop Rt. Rev. Michael Akasius Toppo along with Bishop Emeritus Robert Kerketta SDB and nearly 25 to 30 priests of the diocese. Many religious men and women from different parts of the diocese were there to share our joy. The family members, friends, and well-wishers witnessed this great event. There were students from our different institutions. It was indeed a day of joy and gratitude.



From left - Srs. Amlin Marak, Binita Lakra, Mariam Barwa, Priya Kerketta, Mariam Surin, Kusmita Bara, Madhuri Kerketta

RANCHI PROVINCE

Entrance of the Postulants,

"Remain in my love" Jn. 15:9 was the key sentence of the entrance Ceremony of postulants on 9th January 2016 at Formation House, Khunti. At about 3 p.m., 22 postulants, dressed in uniform stood in line at the entrance door, each holding a burning lamp, waiting to be called by name. The Provincial, Sister Suchita Shalini Xalxo osu welcomed and called each by name. Thereafter all entered the Chapel.

The presence and prayers of the Council members, sisters of Khunti Community and the members of the Formation staff made the whole ceremony solemn and grace - filled. In the beginning of the prayer service, the Provincial



explained and emphasized the meaning and importance of this step of Ursuline way of religious life as postulants. Sister Dorothea gave a very inspiring reflection on the reading taken from Jn. 15: 4-11. She challenged them to remain faithful to the love of Jesus even in the midst of hardships and temptations. After the Ceremony the postulants were escorted to the refectory. They were all warmly congratulated. All ended well with the words of encouragement and with a delicious dinner.