

#ASSUMPTA

Magazine of the Religious of the Assumption

April 2020 - N°1

**“Communication
at the service of
communion and
mission”**

(General Chapter, 2018)

summary

"Each one of us has a mission on earth"



#ASSUMPTA

Year 2020 - n°1

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editorial



I wish you a Happy Anniversary on this Foundation Day!

It gives me immense joy to write the editorial for the maiden issue of #Assumpta which will be released on our 181st Foundation Day, the 30th of April 2020. The Congregation has traveled one hundred and eighty-one years with many ups and downs. We thank God for the gift of Saint Marie Eugenie and the rich charism that we have received from her as a Congregation. The celebration of the Foundation Day invites us to return to our sources and reminds us of both our humble beginnings, and of the fundamental convictions of Saint Marie Eugenie such as: "Everything comes from Jesus Christ. Everything belongs to Jesus Christ. Everything is for Jesus Christ" and "Each one of us has a mission on earth." Each anniversary is a golden opportunity for us to deepen our charism and to witness to it in a creative and meaningful way for our times.

We had Partage Auteuil for many years, until it was discontinued in 2011. I am glad that we can resume this sharing of the news and stories of the Assumption family and circulate its life and dynamism in the Congregation and in our respective local churches. As we share our stories, the message of Pope Francis for the 54th World Communication Day, published on 24th January 2020, is very insightful, giving us a wider orientation and clearer focus.

I believe that, so as not to lose our bearings, we need to make our own the truth contained in good stories. Stories that build up, not tear down; stories that help us rediscover our roots and the strength needed to move forward together. Amid the cacophony of voices and messages that surround us, we need a human story that can speak of ourselves and of the beauty all around us. A narrative that can regard our world and its happenings with a tender gaze. A narrative that can tell us that we are part of a living and interconnected tapestry. A narrative that can reveal the interweaving of the threads which connect us to one another.

In response to the call of the General Chapter 2018, to "make life circulate among ourselves and in the world beyond the Assumption", the general Community asked Sister Mercedes Méndez and her communication team to undertake this important and challenging mission. I thank them for their prompt response and whole-hearted commitment carried out with great zeal and creativity. I also congratulate and thank all those who have contributed to this first issue.

The world is almost shut down because of the COVID-19 pandemic and we face many new challenges. There is so much pain, confusion, uncertainty, and suffering everywhere. Despite the shock and trauma all around us, let us embrace this moment as an opportunity to move forward to create a better world for all.

Let us share our stories and enrich the lives of one another. It is my hope that our stories help us become closer to God, more connected to people and committed to our mission of extending God's Kingdom on earth!

I wish you good fortune and God's choicest blessings upon all – publishers, editors, writers and readers!

SISTER REKHA M. CHENNATTU
Superior General
Original: English



general community

We are happy to share news with you through this first issue of #Assumpta!

This is yet another version of this letter, since events have been shaking up day by day since Covid-19 came to shake up all of humanity. And by the time you read this, we hope it will be history!

You have learned from the last letter of Sr. Rekha (March 15, 2020) that the International Session of the Sisters preparing for perpetual vows and the canonical visit to East Africa have been postponed. The seriousness of the health crisis and the uncertainty about the evolution of the situation in the world led us to take these decisions. We feel more than ever called to collective responsibility, to rediscover ways of living imposed on us by the uncontrollable virus, not in complaint but in creating opportunities for solidarity, attention to others and consensual interdependence.

Alongside the media hype which leads to panic and withdrawal, there are the words of scientists, researchers

and doctors who say more modestly "we don't know", "we can't confirm it", "we dare to hope" ... a word that is finally more reassuring because it is closer to reality and less peremptory.

We too will walk with our people, follow the instructions, remain open to the realities of the world and raise our supplication to the God of Life. And pray for our leaders and all the care giver who do not have an easy task!

Here is a sharing of news since the last newsletter last November.

The visit to the Region of Central Africa, from November 26 to December 17, by Rekha and Marthe, was a plunge into African soil - at least for Sr. Rekha - to experience the richness of a culture where the foreigner is received as a blessing and where welcome is at the same time love, availability, sharing and openness to the other.

The Region is still young. The Sisters are a living force with great potential and creativity. A dynamism is

reflected in the animation and inculturation of the liturgy, the commitment of the Sisters in the works in collaboration with the laity.

In addition to pride in being African (Congolese or Cameroonian), a desire and a reflection on how to become fully African and Religious of the Assumption is at the heart of their search to respond to the many challenges they face in both countries.

The meeting of the Communication Commission with the Commissions, Secretariats and Congregational Services on December 19-20 in Auteuil, in the presence of the General Council, was an opportunity to present the Communication Plan and to agree on an agile and relevant way of working together to facilitate each one's work. We also stressed the need to prepare articles on a regular basis and to translate them into the three languages for publication on the new web page. Finally, we discerned on the merits of two new publications, before presenting them to the CGP:

- a #Assumpta Magazine (A4 format - with photos) with articles from all mission fields. The goal is to highlight a UNIQUE mission, with several ramifications;

-an Assumpta Magazine (A5 format - without photos), with feature articles and topics for reflection.

Sisters and lay people are invited to write an article. We count on you to encourage sharing your resources. They are also means that concretely help us in the sharing of our charism beyond the Congregation.

The CGP has approved these two publications, which should appear in the coming months.

January 2020 – From January 4 to 10, in Brazilia for the South Atlantic Province, there was a Provincial Assembly followed by a provincial chapter. The aim

of these meetings was the finalisation of the Project of the Province and the election of the Provincial Council. It concluded with the celebration of the golden jubilee of Sr. Elvira Ferreira and the 60 years of religious life of Sisters Regina Cavalcanti and Rachel de Castro. Sandra, who was delegated by the General Council, participated as a guest. It was a beautiful experience of discernment and communion.

From January 24 to 26, we welcomed the members of the **International Secretariat of the Assumption Family (SIJIPC)** for its annual meeting. On the RA side, from JIPC-S, Anna Pagani, Viviane Sawadogo and Sandra Durán participated. There was also Claire Myriam from BGSD. You have already received in your communities the letter of Sr. Pilar Trillo, PSA, coordinator of SIJIPC. She shared with us the tasks accomplished during this meeting, especially the preparation of the inter-assumption session from July 5 to 10, 2021: **"A world in movement". Migrants-Refugees-Displaced Persons-Victims of Trafficking: a challenge for the Assumption today**"; and the proposal to join us in the initiative of Pope Francis to celebrate a Laudato Si Week from May 18 to 24, 2020. You can refer to the letter for other interesting suggestions we have received.

On Saturday January 11th we celebrated the Eucharist in memory of **Sr. Therese Maylis** in the presence of her family, the Alumnae of Lübeck and those close to the Community of Auteuil.

On the same day, some Sisters went to the EPHAD of Etampes to celebrate the **Diamond and Golden Jubilees of Sr. Marie des Anges, Sr. Madeline, Sr. Hélène and Sr. Christiane Hélène**. The Mass was presided over by the Bishop of Evry Corbeilles Essonne, Mgr Michel Pansard who then exposed the Blessed Sacrament in the oratory of the House.

The whole celebration was marked by simplicity,



Plenary General Council CGP 2020



From left to right and from top to bottom: Meeting of the Secretariat Int JPICS Assumption Family Group from the visit of Odessa, Virginie and Smitha in Montpellier. Assembly of the Province of Atlántico Sur. Provincial Council of Atlántico Sur. Anniversary of vows of Regina, Elvira and Raquel with Sandra. Sisters who celebrated their jubilee: Br. Christian Hélène, Br. Rekha in Montpellier.

family spirit and joy. The countless joyful detachments experienced during their lives and through the mergers gave a particularly beautiful and moving mark to the offering of their lives to God through this jubilee. A religious consecration of more than 50 years in the following of Jesus Christ in the Church led them to the Congregation of the Religious of the Assumption and it was there that they renewed their YES to God's call. With them, we learn to HOPE, to put our hand in God's hand and to depend on His fidelity.

Let us contemplate the face of God revealed in their gaze, their smile, their hands ... Marie des Anges, Christiane Hélène and Hélène.

The month of January was devoted to the preparation of the CGP 2020 (1-20 February), which you have heard about through communication. It was a profound experience of communion and of the Body Congregation. In each one, we felt an openness, a commitment to work, a quality of listening. The final document, common to all the Provinces should help in the transmission of the CGP and give some orientations for the 18 months until the next CGP to be held in Kigali. Thank you to the Province of Rwanda-Chad for welcoming us!

On February 25, the new page of the **Congregation's website in three languages was born**: a design that required hours of work, much creativity and passion. **BRAVO** to our webmaster, Merce, to Almudena, who supports her, and to the whole team! We invite you to visit it, to share it widely and to collaborate regularly with your contributions so that life may circulate.

Our older Sisters: The Assumption of Heaven has welcomed many of our Sisters in recent months. The immersions in the Communities of elderly Sisters and the EHPAD (Hospital Establishment for Dependent Elderly Persons) have touched the Sisters a lot during the CGP, as places marked by diminution but also by tenderness, mutual help and fraternal affection. As Rekha underlined during a visit, the mission of our elderly Sisters is to be for the Congregation "a driving force through prayer". We felt the importance of human and spiritual accompaniment until the very end. There were also immersions in communities inserted in a multicultural environment. The call is to take the time to listen beyond words, to live and promote internationality in the Congregation and in each Community, to foster a climate of benevolence that dares to confront differences without judgment but also in true dialogue. This was the witness of the Diocese of Seine Saint Denis in the north-eastern suburbs of Paris and in the districts of Argonne in Orléans and Etterbeck in Brussels. This goes hand in hand with a work of inculturation of the charism and spirituality in each continent and our search for an Assumption presence in an increasingly multicultural society.

Rekha and Leela visited **our Sisters in Montpellier** on the 26th and 27th January after the CGP. They were deeply touched by the desire of the Sisters to learn what is lived in the Congregation, the implications of participatory Community animation, interpersonal relationships. They also visited **Sr. Blandine**, then in palliative care and who today - Wednesday, March 18 - left us. Catherine Myriam, Superior of the Montpellier Community reports that Blandine

had entered a peaceful phase in recent days after having gone through Charcot's illness with great courage. We are in thanksgiving for all that Blandine has been for the Congregation and the Province of France, her many years in Auteuil as General Secretary and Superior of the Auteuil Community. For her, the Face of the Lord lights up.

Just after the CGP, **the Ad hoc Formation Team** - composed of Sisters Clare Teresa Tjader, Carmen Escribano, LeelaKottoor, Vicenta Javier, Concepción Hernández, and Celine Naboud, Marthe Marie and Irene Cecile, for the General Council - met in Auteuil to prepare the Formation Session to be held from October 20 to 30, 2020.

It was an opportunity for them to review the existing formation project (Ratio 2009) and to develop a preparatory work that will allow the participants to evaluate and update the Congregation's formation project. The theme of the session is: **Assumption Formation today: Drinking anew from the wellspring anew to respond to the thirst for God.**

The intervention of Rekha planned in Madrid at the time of a PPC (March 6) was cancelled and replaced by a video-conference on the following two themes: in the morning, **Johannine leadership** and its implications for the way in which RA animates our communities and in the afternoon, a reflection on **religious life today** as a gift and a challenge, based on the interventions of Sr. Iñigo at the 2020 CGP.

A meeting of the Assumption Family (the 5 General Councils) was to take place March 13-15 at Auteuil on Leadership. It was also cancelled at the last moment because our AA brothers were not allowed to leave Italian soil.

Sr. Irene joined her Asia Pacific Province on Wednesday, March 4 due to health reasons. We hope to see her again soon! We stay in touch.

"In You all find their home!" Ps 86 Last third Sunday of Lent, Jesus, tired from walking under the burning sun, sits at the side of a well. His destitution pushes him towards the other, the woman of Samaria: "Give me a drink". Jesus is God's gift to the woman as the woman is God's gift to Jesus.

A situation that echoes the interdependence that is so much in question with the pandemic that we are going through. The fragility and the "not knowing" of what will happen in the days and months ahead puts us all on the same level. Can we hope for a repercussion of this awareness on our social, economic and political systems? Sr. Olivia, a French nun from the Congregation of the Religious of Mary Immaculate, lives in Milan. She writes on her FB page this March 13 (excerpt) :

"And here is Hope, above all: these are the rich and productive countries of Europe that was so easily

thought to be willing to get rid of its old people, that we thought cynical about the euthanasia of the most "precarious of health"... these are the countries that suddenly defend life, the most fragile, the least productive, the "cumbersome" and heavy for the system-king, with the famous problem of pensions... And here is our economy on its knees. On our knees at the bedside of the oldest and most vulnerable. A whole country that is coming to a standstill, for them...". The Sister continues with multiple examples of creativity and solidarity among parents, students, researchers, law enforcement ...


This "living water" of which Jesus speaks, not only quenches thirst, but has the capacity to transform the thirsty into a "gushing spring". Let us be these springs gushing out for one another.

Everywhere the speeches of the rulers become more solemn and serious. We can add to them the words of the book of Isaiah: "For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: your salvation is in conversion and rest, your strength is in calm and trust" (Is 30:15).

With St. Joseph as our companion, inspired by Pope Francis: "Joseph's rest revealed to him the will of God. In this moment of rest in the Lord, taking a break from our many duties and activities, God speaks to us too. He speaks to us in the reading we have listened to, in our prayers and testimonies, and in the silence of our hearts." Pope Francis April 9, 2015

In communion of heart with all the communities and families of the world and in the one mission of the Kingdom.

Sisters REKHA, SANDRA, ISABELLE, MARTHE AND IRENE.
General Community
Original: French



Covid-19: Praying with the world

"I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem... a spirit that will bring forth in them kindness and supplication. "Zech 12:10

Saint John, in the gesture of washing of the feet, invites us to see the whole life of Jesus as a life of service, the service of one who is attentive to the other. There is the service of healing, of liberation; there is also the service of prayer, where Jesus speaks of his own to the Father. In this sense, prayer is service. It is a disposition of the heart, an attitude. When I pray, alone or in Community, I go beyond myself to think of the other and to place him or her in the hands of the Father.

This is what inspired this writing. These are reflections taken from articles published in the periodical La Croix, the weekly Courier International and other programs. They can help us to carry the world in our prayer: a prayer of thanksgiving for so many gestures of solidarity; a prayer of confident supplication so that the sick may recover their health and the pandemic may cease; a prayer of contrition for personal and collective injustices and indifference so that a concrete change may transform us and bring about a more just and fraternal world.

The text is in different parts and is based on newspapers from Europe, although some journalists also come from other continents. The Communication Team invited each Province to share the news on the Congregation's website so that we can feel part of the same humanity and let our prayer for the world rise up together.



Covid-19 in Central Africa

Still, good news!

The *Courier International* of 26 March-1 April was entitled "Rethinking the World" and *La Croix* of 4 April "The Good News of the Week". In the midst of an incessant stream of worrying news, there are also reasons for hope. New forms of solidarity are already appearing; the feeling of citizenship has been awakened more than ever; countries are calling on volunteers who respond generously -- retired doctors and nurses, medical students, volunteers for home visits and caring for the homeless... New technologies, when used responsibly, are capable of bringing us together, giving us news, keeping us connected, continuing our work, pursuing our studies, offering interesting programmes, etc. For parents who live at a frenetic pace, confinement is an opportunity to have more time with the family and share free moments.

A Czech author, Tomas Sedlaek, writes "the world has a Shabbat. Cities will calm down. Time will stand still and people will return to their own rhythm of life, a daily life with human dimensions (...). Our big cities will become villages with neighbours." We are already experiencing this at 8 p.m. when we open the windows to applaud the caregivers. He adds: "Maybe we will learn to be more ourselves and with ourselves. Maybe we'll learn to look at the world around us in a better way? "

But let's not forget...

The crisis also has dramatic consequences, especially for the most vulnerable for whom confinement is synonymous with imprisonment, domestic violence, loneliness and isolation. Elderly people can no longer receive visits. The risk of the

virus spreading is much more acute in the cities than in the countryside. In some megacities or suburbs, where housing is cramped or precarious, confinement is illusory. What can be done when people's incomes are linked mainly to the informal economy and they are forced to work outside their homes in order to feed themselves and survive? The pandemic highlights the deep fractures in our societies, the abysmal gaps between nations in terms of health infrastructure and economic and human resources. We also think of those who die in solitude; of families who cannot say goodbye to a loved one; of places where burials or cremations have become difficult.

The news from Covid-19 occupies the whole scene. What has become of the migrants expelled from Turkey, Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere? How is Greece supported by other European countries? What happened to the refugees leaving Venezuela and Nicaragua? Is the scourge of terrorism in Burkina Faso at an end?

Accepting our lack of peace

In record time and around the world, economies plummeted, inter-nation travel came to a halt. We all found ourselves in a situation of risk of contamination. Is this not a sign of the fragility of our economic, political and health models?

Our societies are over-informed. We share curiosity, fear and vulnerability. We are filled with anxiety.

Sr. Véronique Magron, a French and Dominican Sister, invites us to "accept that we are overcome by anxiety, sadness or sorrow. How indeed could it be otherwise when we hear the howling sirens

of the emergency vehicles? When we listen, even sparingly, to the news? when we receive news from sick relatives or colleagues? And especially when we consider all the distress that is beyond our reach (...) I wish that we would simply consent to the feelings that run through us, to our concern for the other, believing deeply that the peace that comes from our God is given in this very place, during these very days. "

Fear reminds us that some things are beyond us, that there are laws we cannot break, that certain limits are there to protect us. We feel that there is something to learn from these perilous times.

Will this health crisis lead to a better world?

A Colombian poet, William Ospina, wrote, "If there is a tired and sick world that cracks and collapses, there must be a new world in gestation that challenges us. "

After a global crisis of this magnitude, the world will not be the same as it was before. This forces us to question ourselves, personally and in Community. In a short time, people have been able to give up many comforts and freedoms. Perhaps this is an opportunity to refocus on our lives, to regain meaning. In the newspapers and on social networks, secular or religiously inspired reflections are tending in this direction. Televised Masses, the intentions of Pope Francis each morning -- the elements are there to support a spiritual life and bring out the best in people.

In all countries, the courage and even heroism of the doctors and nurses who work tirelessly in situations where the risk of being contaminated is a daily occurrence is highlighted, especially in places where protective equipment is lacking. They work overtime, give up their family life, create networks to visit isolated people. In homes for the elderly, caregivers sometimes remain confined with the residents to prevent the virus from entering the home. In the same way, the people who provide a public service that seemed so 'ordinary and normal' to us are those who allow life to go on: cashiers, bus and truck drivers, postal carriers, delivery men, garbage collectors. Often of modest means, they have to drive for hours before arriving at their place of work.

Globalization in question? Let's ask the economists.

In this context of global crisis, many economic periodicals question the paradigmatic pillar of globalization, namely neo-liberalism, heir to the classic doctrine of "laissez-faire, laissez-passer". The epidemic highlights the weaknesses of an interconnected economy. The question is whether we are prepared to give up a system that has made us rich. Today everything is moving faster: goods, services, diseases. Cancelled flights, postponed

orders, companies going bankrupt are the result of an interconnected economy. We need to recognize that in the last 20 years globalization has created wealth, increased life expectancy, made it possible to buy at low prices. But it has also been accompanied by the relocation of companies, increased automation (resulting in higher unemployment), stagnating wages and the decline of traditional industries. China accounts for nearly 20 percent of world output because firms have relied on cheap Chinese exports, with little regard for the risk of making an authoritarian regime the engine of world production. Today, the disruption of supply chains since the fall in Chinese production has a direct impact on all global supply chains, especially in the manufacture of medicines or specialized tools.

According to Gaël Giraud, a Jesuit priest and economist, the pandemic is a sign that globalization has gone too far. We need to review the organisation of a globalized market with fast moving international supply chains that make us very fragile and vulnerable.

Offshoring of business enterprises has led to a rift between employees and anonymous bosses with whom they no longer have ties; it causes environmental deterioration by increasing the carbon dioxide emissions needed to transport goods and people around the globe. Did it take the coronavirus to finally become aware of this? The pandemic is likely to mark a turning point in the history of hyper-globalization. Not that Covid-19 will reverse globalization, but it may accelerate a change. The world will no doubt remain fascinated by interconnectivity, but it will be wary of the fragilities that go hand in hand with it. In this context, more and more politicians and business leaders see interconnectivity as a danger rather than an asset. They are beginning to look for technologies that can limit dependence on foreign production; they are looking for cheaper, renewable energy sources that could play in favour of home-based production.



Covid-19 in Central Africa

A health system to be strengthened

The Covid-19 crisis is likely to be a revelation of the limits of the states' ability to protect their populations. The priority for governments is above all health: investment in the hospital sector is needed to save lives, to carry out systematic screening wherever possible and, where possible, to support doctors - both hospital and general practitioners - and nurses. The top priority is to care for people, and for that there must be massive state intervention and strong public services.

In many places, in both the North and the South, there is a lack of foresight on the part of governments and a lack of protective equipment and testing. In many countries, the health infrastructure is insufficient: hospitals lack qualified health care personnel, equipment and money. Not to mention the lack of social security and health insurance. Elsewhere, the health budget has been sacrificed, thousands of hospital beds have been cut; governments have not listened to the complaints and suffering of hospital staff demanding more personnel, infrastructure and equipment.

On the other hand, in a very positive and creative way, on the four continents or on a national level, companies, individuals and vocational schools are mobilising to help by manufacturing masks, protective clothing, non-contact thermometers, thermal cameras and disinfectant gel.

It is hoped that the coronavirus crisis will lead to an awareness of the importance of having a strong and effective health system.

The need for states to intervene massively

Other analyses point out that those things that are not able to be relocated - remaining as close as possible to the consumer - are also affected: activities related to health, but also education,

catering, tourism and entertainment. The fact that the crisis is primarily a health crisis is fundamental. We can expect priorities to change and an increase in social and health spending. States will have to reassess the financial resources devoted to human development. The economy of the twenty-first century will turn more towards health and education. Yet it is this service economy that is most affected today.

Most experts believe that an austerity plan such as the one imposed in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis should be avoided at all costs. In those years, the money went into the financial markets and not into the real economy. This had the effect of increasing the speculative bubble that is bursting today. We must not repeat the same mistake. According to Gaël Giraud, countries, when they can, are correct to inject money into the economy to avoid its running out of steam. This money must go into the real economy. Money must be created for people, not just for banks. For example, the European Central Bank sends money to the Public Investment Bank to give loans to companies and make donations to households or unemployed people. Finally, do everything possible to prevent unemployment, to prevent the most fragile companies from going bankrupt, and to create new jobs that can be used for a green reindustrialization of our economy. For economist Daniel Cohen, it is normal that the health crisis, and the confinement it imposes, plunges countries into recession. This is undoubtedly the price we must pay if we want to curb the epidemic. The economist adds: "Faced with the coronavirus, we must assume to temporarily break the economic machine." For him, "ideally, the loss of activity would have to be fully covered by the state".

As we can see, a particular feature of this crisis is the return of a welfare state. A solidarity fund is also



Covid-19 in the Philippines



Covid-19 in Belgium

to be set up for the self-employed and for those who do not receive health insurance. The question that arises is how long the confinement will last: until when will states be able to support the economy in this way?

Consolidate solidarity at all levels - macro and micro.

Solidarity at the international and continental level needs to prove itself. We hope that in these difficult times, countries support each other and transcend national egoisms. In Europe, for example, this would mean that more prosperous countries would agree to pool their debts to strengthen the EU budget for countries in greater economic and social difficulty. Good governance would mean moving forward together because no state can save itself.

Will international cooperation between governments be up to the task? The WHO (World Health Organization) calls on the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank to support national economies.

At the national level and at the level of our neighbourhoods, how will we be attentive to people who are vulnerable, to people who are isolated?

Moreover, in precarious places, gestures of solidarity from neighbour to neighbour, the sharing of food, the readiness to help are signs of humanity that give reason for hope.

Ecology

There is a link between the ecological crisis and the pandemic: the destruction of biodiversity puts us in

contact with viruses. Man, the dominant species, has broken the chains of reproduction of all living species and is, at the same time, the best vehicle for a pathogen.

Scientists continue to search for the origin of the virus. They started by studying two other coronaviruses that also triggered acute respiratory distress which appeared quite recently: in 2002, the Sars-CoV, a virus that appeared in China, which is transmitted from animal to human and then from



Covid-19 in France



Covid-19 in Equator

human to human, and in 2012, the coronavirus Mers-CoV, which appeared in Saudi Arabia with similar symptoms.

The third coronavirus close to Sars CoV, called Sars CoV2, transmissible to humans, emerged in China in mid-December 2019. The disease it causes is called Covid-19. Many unknowns about the biology of this virus remain to this day. To put it simply, the hypothesis is that the virus is the result of a recombination between two different viruses. Two questions remain unanswered: in which organism did this recombination take place: a bat, a pangolin or another species? And above all, under what conditions did this recombination take place? You have to go and read qualified newspapers on the subject!

A journalist from Argentina, Marina Aiezn, in *Courrier International* analyses the link between the appearance of the virus and deforestation and the destruction of ecosystems, which particularly affects tropical areas. These ecosystems are being destroyed to make way for intensive industrial monocultures. "The emergence of these diseases also stems from the manipulation and trafficking of wild fauna and flora, which are often threatened with extinction. Scientists have been studying the links between the explosion of viral diseases and deforestation for about ten years. It is not when a bulldozer crushes everything in its path on a mountain teeming with life that the phenomenon is visible: it is when strange symptoms and previously unknown ailments appear in individuals. "

This is true in many countries from Southeast Asia to Latin America. These diseases that are transmitted

from animals to humans, the so-called "zoonoses", have always existed, but they are on the increase today because the conditions necessary to spread are in place. "Deforestation has caused several species of bats to congregate on the few trees that are still standing. This meeting of different species, which in the usual environment do not interact, has acted as a breeding ground. "

Similarly, deforestation causes a resurgence of malaria: the more open spaces there are, the more pools of water appear where mosquitoes that transmit malaria breed. This same article talks about Mother Nature's revenge. "The destruction of ecosystems in the name of progress or simply greed has dark sides that we end up suffering in our flesh.

The picture may seem bleak, but one thing seems to have changed: the world, which has remained blind to the climate emergency, may be opening its eyes with Covid-19. Let's hope that this awareness is accompanied by political decision and choices by citizens!

Increased vigilance for the respect of freedoms and democracy

Another recurring theme since the appearance of Covid-19 is the balance between the fight against the pandemic and the preservation of individual freedoms. Will the surveillance techniques made available to the state to prevent the spread of the virus limit human rights and freedoms? Surveillance techniques for confined citizens are being developed in some states, using cameras, drones, applications and geolocation of telephones.

In the face of the fight against the epidemic, are these measures acceptable? Do they not endanger democracies? Here and there, authoritarian excesses in the event of non-compliance with confinement become a threat.

Conversely, the health policy of South Korea, a democratic country, is cited as an example: from the beginning of the crisis, Korea conducted a large-scale testing campaign. This made it possible to identify the chain of contamination and to restrict the confinement of people carrying the virus. These tests also made it possible to limit the confinement and thus the economic downturn.

Finally, the circulation of misinformation, rumours and conspiracy theories on social media that create confusion and foment reactions of hatred, and hasty judgements on crisis management and leaders. Now more than ever, we need to check the sources of information and be humble enough to accept that we do not understand everything and do not judge only on the basis of our own culture.

Signs of hope

Cooperation among nations to fight the pandemic is a sign of hope. The pandemic shows that without trust and global solidarity, we will not be able to stop the epidemic. It is to be hoped that this crisis has made us aware of the real danger posed by global disunity.

Scientists are joining forces to act together: researchers around the world are trying to understand how the virus works in order to find treatments and a vaccine as quickly as possible. Research results are widely shared on forums and open access for research centres.

To conclude, here is a quote from a Togolese economist, Kako Nubukpo, published in *Le Monde*

on 4 April: "Any crisis, however dramatic it may be, can nevertheless conceal opportunities to be seized in order to 'co-construct' a fairer and ecologically viable globalisation. And the African continent should participate in this new world. "

May a family spirit extend to the whole world and may we participate in the building of a fraternal world!

Sister ISABELLE ROUX
General Councillor
Original: English



Covid-19 in the Philippines

echo from the archives

Archives on the Move: Our Heritage Treasure in a New Space

**M^aEugenia's
12,000 letters
will be in
a special
protection
cupboard**

The main focus of the Archives' news is the move to the new room, located on the second floor. This issue of the Echo from the Archives offers you a tour of the room, which will allow you to preserve the documents in better conditions. The move of the documents will take months as we are taking the opportunity to make an inventory of all the documents and to digitize this inventory. This will make the research work much easier in the future. External help was planned, but the world situation is delaying this. Sister Marie Claude and Sister Véronique are therefore working on preparing the boxes and organizing them. Some Sisters from the Auteuil Community also helped with the material preparation of the boxes. Thanks to all of you!

The furnishing of the new hall

A strong cupboard, which protects against fire. In this cupboard will be kept our most precious documents: the 12,000 original letters of Marie Eugenie, written in her own hand; the original registers in which the first Sisters wrote and signed their profession formula; the workbooks on the first constitutions, corrected by Marie Eugenie and Therese Emmanuel.

A movable piece of furniture. It saves a lot of space and allows the storage of a maximum of documents by saving the space of the corridors. You have to turn your big wheel to access the documents! It's fun!

Classic floors. They are reserved for more used or more recent documents. The coloured boxes make them look cheerful!

Large cabinets with sturdy shelves. They will hold photo albums, larger and heavier documents.

The packaging of Mother Marie Eugenie's letters

Corinne Blanc, the lay person who belongs to the international team, came to spend a few days in Auteuil to begin the safekeeping of Marie Eugenie's letters: each letter is wrapped in a special paper, PH neutral to reduce acidity. A sheet of this same paper is slipped between each sheet of letters. Some letters can contain up to 10 pages! We have also already prepared the Education Tips and the Intimate Notes. This gave us a lot of emotion. This has allowed the Sisters present in the house to come and see the originals with their own eyes.

The museum project

The room on the first floor, when it is empty, will become a museum which

is intended to be an interactive place, carrying the history of the Congregation from its origins to the unfolding of the charism in the Provinces. In addition to the various souvenirs of our Mothers (rings, books, rosaries, etc.), the Archives team would like it to become a resource place for Sisters passing through, with the possibility of interactive research. Do not hesitate to let us know your dreams for this museum. Some of them may come true! You can also send us pictures of installations you have seen in other museums and that you liked! You will soon receive a more precise consultation to co-construct this project.

Archive documents on the new site of the Congregation

You may have explored the Archive Documents section of the new Congregation's web page. We want to give you some keys to help you find your way around. The documents have been divided into two categories: the original documents (in the section entitled "XIXth") and the later documents (in the section entitled "XXth-XXIst"). Many of them are open access. Feel free to explore. We will add documents little by little. If you wish to see a document that you cannot find, you can always submit it to the Archives, after checking that it is not in the "Resources" section.

Thank you for all the mails received in response to our work! Thank you also for your requests because they make the Archives live as a Resource Centre, which is their vocation.

For any suggestion or request:
archives@assumpta.org

Sister VÉRONIQUE THIÉBAUT

Archivist of the Congregation,
and the International Archives team
Original: French



New room. The steel cupboard



New room. Shelves in perspective



New room. Numbered boxes



New room. The movable furniture

Love, and say it through your life

We wish to continue being a bridge to offer concrete spaces, times, places and encounters to make us supportive of those who today we know suffer the most.

The Assumption has a missionary countenance. From the first years of its foundation, St. Marie-Eugenie and the first Community had a special attraction and a great zeal for the extension of the Kingdom and for crossing borders. For our Foundress the world is not big enough for her love (Marie-Eugenie, Intimate Notes, n° 160/01, May 1837) nor for all the good that the Church and this new Congregation can do.

It was thus that the Assumption gradually spread within Europe itself and to other countries further afield. Even before the death of St. Marie Eugenie, the Sisters founded in Nicaragua, the Philippines and El Salvador. (The Beehive and the Boat p.47)

As a result of this great passion of which we are heirs, from 1954 M. Marie Denyse, then Superior General of the Religious of the Assumption, gave the Congregation a new missionary impulse and sent her Sisters to Africa, America and Asia. In the course of her many travels, she became aware of the diverse realities of these countries and noted the enormous needs that required hands and hearts willing to serve. That's when she launched the AMA Project (Assumption Missionary Associates), "she will thus offer hundreds of young people, throughout the world, but especially in France and Spain, the possibility of giving two years of their life benevolently to the service of a mission. It is to one person, living in Auteuil, that M.M. Denyse entrusts the administration of this amazing work: Mademoiselle Demay will carry out this charge, until her death, with great delicacy." (M. Marie Denyse Du Saint Sacrament "For me to live is Christ" p. 53, M. Hélene Marie)

Since then, various Provinces have embraced this way of opening spaces of encounter and free commitment for many young people who are enriched by the experience of service and of interculturality and who, by offering their qualities, their time and their formation, have done much good over the decades, finding at the same time

an expression of their vocation within the Church. There are truly beautiful testimonies of these experiences around the world!

We are certain that today more than ever, we are invited to go with others to the frontiers. Our international and missionary Congregation is committed to Education and to the transformation of society. We wish to continue to be a bridge to offer concrete spaces, times, places and meetings to make us be in solidarity with those who we know suffer most today.

Sister CARMEN LÓPEZ
JCvivit Secretariat
Original: Spanish



Marie Laure in catechism class with primary school children in Leon, Mexico

A testimony...

My name is Marie-Laure. I'm 23 years old. I come from the south of France, from Bordeaux to be exact. I'm a law student and am currently an AMA in Mexico!

Only a year ago I would never have imagined being here today, but God's ways are impenetrable... I knew that I wanted to take time to do something else, to put myself more at the service of others and to deepen my faith. I didn't know the Community or what it meant to be an AMA but I was lucky enough to meet one of the Sisters of the Community who told me about it and I thought it was perfect! It is a project that I thought through personally but above all in close collaboration with the Sisters. In fact, I met them several times, spent some time in the Community and discussed in depth the reality of the mission, Community life and how my personal profile and desires fit in with what it means to be an AMA in concrete terms.

My desire to go to Latin America and, in particular to Mexico, became a reality. I am delighted, as I would have been if it had not been possible. My mission was decided on with the Sisters, who always asked me if I wanted to do what they wanted to do, and it was refined when I arrived and began to live with them. So my mission was to teach French in a school and help the Sisters with their catechism classes. But AMA's mission goes beyond that and I discovered it as I went along. Having come to teach French, I never imagined that I would help simply by listening and offering a friendly smile, praying the rosary with a grieving family, in fact not "doing" anything special.

Above all, I never imagined that this mission would move me so much and make me look back on my journey, both in my joys and in my pains, which is essential at this crucial stage of my life and which has become a solid springboard for me.

What I mainly retain from this adventure is my relationship with the Sisters. I have developed a very strong bond with them, and that is what I will miss most. But the Assumption is a big family, whose spirit I have been able to feel since I have known the Community, and even more so since I became an AMA, and I know that these bonds will not be lost. In fact, it is the Sisters of the Community who will do us the honour of blessing our commitment in Mexico. They brought me to their family, so bringing them to mine seemed natural

MARIE LAURE
AMA
Original: French



We share life, religious and volunteers.

assumption together

“I want to be faithful to my baptism, to keep my life united to Christ present in all my brothers and Sisters”

“We manifest our belonging to the universal Church, responding to a concrete call in the midst of the people of God.”

“I want to be faithful to my baptism...” perhaps these are the words that best define my vocation as a lay person since, through the Sacrament of Baptism, we become part of the Church and members of the Body of Christ.

And as a Church, in intimate union with God, we form one people: “The laity are gathered together in the People of God and make up the Body of Christ under one head. Whoever they are they are called upon, as living members, to expend all their energy for the growth of the Church and its continuous sanctification, since this very energy is a gift of the Creator and a blessing of the Redeemer.” (LG IV # 33).

It is in the ordinariness of life that we the laity manifest, from our work, our families and in our daily lives, our belonging to the universal Church, responding to a concrete call in the midst of the people of God.

It is not a matter of “not being a cleric or a religious”, but of responding to the call of the Lord Himself, to BE and BEING in the midst of the world, anticipating the Kingdom of God in daily life. “Adorer of the Father and Saviour of humanity, Christ calls us, the lay of the Assumption, to follow Him every day and to commit ourselves to knowing Him and making Him known, loving Him and making Him loved, and thus extending His Kingdom” (Lay Assumption Way of Life). Christ undoubtedly calls us to be a leaven of life in the midst of our society, putting ourselves at the service of His Word and being witnesses of the One Who sends us into the whole world: “Go into all the world and proclaim the Good News to all creation” (Mark 16:15-20).

My vocation as a lay member of the Assumption is born of an encounter with the good and merciful God, Who incarnates Himself in the faces of different men and women, who out of love for the Church, proclaimed the Good News of the Gospel throughout my life, with joy and enthusiasm.

Only after the experience of meeting the Lord incarnate in the other, with a life that is none other than the life of Christ Himself present in our brother and Sister, in time and space, in the history in which we live and love, does He continue to meet us and say to us: “Come and follow Me”.

This experience of encountering God is of vital importance in my life journey as a believer, since only from the encounter with the Lord can one follow Him, knowing in Whom I have trusted.

Every day that passes I try to live my lay commitment, as our Foundress would say, as fully as possible. Eleven years have passed since that Pentecost, when for the first time, in front of my Community, I manifested the first “I want to be faithful to my baptism...”, eleven years of ups and downs, of joys and sorrows, of successes and errors, but without a doubt, eleven years of the presence of the One Who, with a wise and loving hand, leads our way. Eleven years, of a shared life project, since on this path I have always had my wife as a companion. Together we have been able to share, in the day-to-day reality

of each one, the experiences that, without a doubt, have been shaping our lives.

And today, together with our son, we put ourselves every day in God's hands to be a testimony of love in the midst of the world.

We live out our commitment in ‘La Asunción del Barrio La Alegría’, trying to give answers to the different needs that arise in these times. From a project of shared mission in which every day we try to make the dream of Saint Marie Eugenie come true, to make Jesus Christ known, to love Him and make Him loved. Accompanying and allowing ourselves to be accompanied by each one of the persons who come to the Assumption Centre each day in search of a word, a gesture and a look that reminds us that He continues to encounter each person, loving his concrete reality.

Each day I thank God for the charism of the Assumption in us, for being able to live out the Kingdom in the manner of Marie Eugenie.

Thank you, Mother, for giving us the heritage of feeling loved by the God of LIFE, and for teaching us to fix our gaze on Him. Thank you for placing at the centre of our lives the One Who loves us infinitely, for making us participants in your great passion for the Kingdom and for announcing the Gospel with simplicity, a sense of family, generosity and enthusiasm. Thank you, Mother Marie Eugenie, for this charism that today extends to the great family of Assumption Together, who wish to live with strength this passion for the Kingdom of God.

Make us capable of being bearers of the Good News of God, of being educators in the midst of humanity and of continuing to transform history by knowing in Whom we have trusted.

FALI MORENO RODRÍGUEZ

Assumption Together
Original: Spanish



Pillars on which my vocation is based



educación

Our students at the Plural+ Festival

Out of 1160 videos registered worldwide, two of our teams were recognized last November 13th inside the UN facilities in New York

“The winning videos are chosen according to their potential impact on the audience, as well as their artistic, innovative and creative content”

On both pages: Our selected young people, in New York

PLURAL+

YOUTH VIDEO FESTIVAL ON MIGRATION
CELEBRATING DIVERSITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION



Mrs. Paloma Fierro, History teacher of our school Assumption of Las Águilas (Mexico), within the framework of her course, proposed to the students in the 5th semester of CCH (corresponding to the 1st semester of the last year of the school) to participate in the PLURAL + Festival organized by the UNAOC (Alliance of Civilizations of the United Nations) and the IOM (migrations of the United Nations).

This Festival is offered to young people from all over the world to encourage them to explore and deepen the social problems of today's world, often characterized by intolerance and cultural divisions. "The PLURAL + Youth Video Festival recognizes young people as powerful agents of social change and enables them to share their creative vision with the world and foster respect for diversity." (<https://pluralplus.unaoc.org/>)

Each year, young people are therefore invited to express their views on these issues creatively in short films. The films must be original and creative (animation, documentary, video, comedy, etc.) with a message to make the audience think constructively about migration, diversity, social inclusion and the prevention of xenophobia.

"The winning videos are chosen on the basis of their potential to have an impact on the public, as well as their artistic, innovative and creative content. PLURAL + award winners are invited to New York to participate in the annual PLURAL + Awards ceremony and a series of side events offering professional development and co-production opportunities." (<https://pluralplus.unaoc.org/>)

The pupils, therefore, made videos in which they talked about social inclusion, xenophobia, migration, among other topics. An internal competition was held to select the 3 best videos from each class, which were then entered in the Festival.

Out of the 1160 videos recorded around the world, two of our teams were recognized on November 13 at the United Nations premises in New York:

1- In the 13-17 years old category: the video "TAGS, Let's make the difference with our differences"" from our students Mateo Díaz, Montserrat Sánchez B, Santiago Velasco, Maricarmen López C, Isabel Conconi and Edgar García V.

Synopsis: Foreigners are confronted with the limitations of labels and realize that reality does not always meet their expectations and preconceived ideas. <https://pluralplus.unaoc.org/13-17-age-category/tags/>

2- Special prize: for the video "Would You Say It Face to Face?" by Santiago Casares, Andrés Sánchez Polo, Eugenia Bringas and Constanza Vargas.

Synopsis: This short film raises awareness of the repercussions of hurtful words, especially on social media. <https://pluralplus.unaoc.org/2019-winners/would-you-say-it-face-to-face/>

During the awarding ceremony a strong message was given by Santiago Casares "...We need to stick together, to be stronger" :

<https://twitter.com/IOMatUN/status/1194659455062990850?s=20>

Let's celebrate! because if it is an achievement and a credit to these young people for their teamwork, it is also the result of all the efforts and accompaniment throughout their schooling since their childhood within our educational Community (Yes, Community: parents, teachers, directors, religious, coordinators, administrative staff and mayor).

It is a real recognition for these young people who are committed to their reality, seeking solutions and alternatives in the face of current problems, based on their capacity for reflection, analysis, creativity, teamwork, solidarity, empathy and service. They were able to present their work with confidence and assurance, speaking extraordinary English. They represented not only their country, their generation but also their school in this international festival. They accepted the responsibility they have today, facing the challenges that the world presents to us.

But it is also a recognition of the work, dedication, effort, perseverance, love, motivation, preparation and dynamism of each of those who have touched the lives of these young people in one way or another.

Let's celebrate! for it is the fruits that are beginning to be harvested, after having taken care of the seeds sown with that characteristic stamp that is ours: "BE ASSUMPTION".

May this experience make us proud of what we do, who we are and what we are capable of achieving and offering to our society. May it serve as a motivation for our daily efforts. May it make us understand that there are many reasons to celebrate. May it allow

us to recognize that we are on the right path, that it is worthwhile and that, as St. Marie Eugenie says, "None of our efforts should be the last". May it be an example to celebrate the goals we achieve every day, no matter how small, and may it be a motivation to continue to give the best of ourselves.

Sister ISABELLE EUGENIE GORGEU

Secretariat of Education

Original: Spanish



the Easter Story

Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life

Easter marks the end of 40 days of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. It is the principal festival of the ecclesiastical calendar which celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and our salvation. The Alleluia is sung for the first time since Lent; 'I saw water coming out from the right side of the temple, Alleluia! And all those, whom this water reached, were saved and will say: Alleluia, alleluia!' (Vidi aquam). And the Paschal greeting 'He is risen! He is risen, indeed!' is exchanged.

St John Chrysostom's famous Easter homily exclaims:

*If anyone be devout and loveth God,
Let them enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast!
If anyone be a wise servant,
Let them rejoicing enter into the joy of his Lord.
If any have laboured long in fasting,
Let them now receive their recompense.
If any have wrought from the first hour...
Let them with thankfulness keep the feast...
O Death, where is thy sting?
O Hell, where is thy victory?
Christ is risen, and thou art overthrown!
Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen!
Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice!
Christ is risen, and life reigns!
Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the
grave.
For Christ, being risen from the dead,
Is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen
asleep.
To Him be glory and dominion
Unto ages of ages. Amen*

St. John Chrysostom's homily announces, celebrates and amplifies the message that Jesus is the fulfilment of God's promises to humankind. The Paschal mystery is a sign of the glory of God. By His death Christ liberates us from sin; by His Resurrection He opens for us a new way of life in this world and the next (CCC.654). St Paul says that if we deny the Resurrection then our faith is vain (1 Cor. 15:17). Easter is not a story of a spiritual event that happened just once a long time ago. We do not say, Christ has risen but rather Christ is risen because He rose from the dead and again He is alive (Luke 24:34).

Easter is a time of great joy. St Marie Eugenie teaches us that, 'the joy of Easter, is a deep joy, a joy that transforms us...a joy that consists in renewing ourselves in the joy of our vocation, in wishing the same good to all, the same dwelling...' (St. Marie Eugenie, MME, Chapter 13 April 1879).

The Covid 19 effect: The Easter Vigil Mass is the most important Mass of the liturgical year, and like most

Masses it is a communal event. However, the Easter celebrations this year unlike any other year were disrupted by the Covid-19 virus. This meant that in many parts of the free world churches were closed and public Masses were banned; an unprecedented event.

The Decree in Time of Covid-19 (II), issued on 25th March, stated that although the Easter Vigil Mass is not transferable in itself 'expressions of popular piety and processions which enrich the days of Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum can be transferred to other suitable days in the year'. In many places these processions will take place on 14th-15th September (the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and the memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows) which in effect will extend the Easter preparations and celebrations for far longer than ever before.

However, for many people this Easter has been a time of isolation and sorrow. It is in times such as these that we faithfully continue to place our trust, hope and joy in Jesus Christ, the Resurrection and the Life. Again we dare to say Christ is Risen! He is risen, indeed!

Sister CAROLYN MORRISON

England. Province of Europe.

Original: English

The Resurrection and the Women at the Tomb
Fra Angelico, San Marco
Photo taken by Sr. Carolyn Morrison



“The earth is a place of glory for God”
Mother M^a Eugenia

In May this year the ground breaking encyclical of Pope Francis, ‘Laudato Si... on care for our common home’ will be five years old. This courageous and beautiful document, the fruit of much consultation, spoke a true and prophetic word to us all, to those who belong to the Church and those who do not. We were confronted with the truth of our situation and asked for a deep appreciation of the loving work of our creator in all the creatures of our world, He, who ‘saw that it was good, that it was very good’; we were also forced to look at the terrible damage that is being perpetrated to our soils, the air we breathe and the waters rivers and oceans and seas, through pollution and waste, and extractive industries affecting all our lives but particularly the lives of the poor and so many voiceless creatures. Everything is interconnected, the cry of the poor and the cry of the environment, the loss of species, the desecration of our life supporting mechanisms and the very web of life.

The encyclical has had an effect, some have taken this to heart in a true ecological conversion. It was heard not only by members of the Church but also many others, those already aware who have been working on environmental issues for many years who welcomed it with great gratitude, and those new to it. Slowly the reality is beginning to sink in, now the young are on the streets, non violent activists are popping up all over the world demanding more action on the climate emergency and the environmental destruction accompanying it. Many and various are the initiatives at all levels of government, local groups, NGOs etc.

About the same time as Laudato Si, five years ago the French edition of ‘Towards an Eco Assumption’ was circulated; the English and Spanish came some months later. Martine Tapsoba r.a. wrote in the introduction “What a beautiful intuition it was that our decision was taken even before the election of Pope Francis and his intuition to offer ‘Laudato Si’ to the Church and to the world”. It was at the Chapter of 2012 that it had been decided to get a document together on the ecological crisis, it’s causes, the structures exacerbating it as well as well possible ways forward, all from our experiences as Sisters of the Assumption from very many different parts of the world.

How reassuring it was to see at once that there was so much in common between Laudato Si and our ‘Towards an Eco Assumption’, even including sections on contributions from other faiths; the Pope was inviting all people to delve into their spiritual resources.. The need for ecological conversion,

Book cover: Towards an Eco-Assumption



the communal efforts required are to be found in both documents. Laudato Si (181) denounced the global system of a short term, predatory, deregulated financialised system producing greater and greater inequalities and distress; it is clearly on the side of the voiceless promoting a genuine and profound humanism. It is there too in the Assumption document. Martine had written “... it aims to motivate and challenge us so that we give greater attention to the cause of ecology on which depends the future of our planet and all humanity. This is the way we can show the love we have for our time”.

It was remarkable to those who were trying to get the Assumption document together how willing the Sisters were to contribute and at what depth and wisdom, we all know how busy Sisters can be. Perhaps it was recognised as call of the Spirit. But another aspect struck me which was that the seeds of this sensitivity are so present in the writing of Marie Eugenie. Would she not have been thrilled with Pope Francis’ encyclical! ‘We bless God for all that he has made in Creation, the earth, the sea, the mountains and valleys... and we call upon all creatures to bless Him’. “Adam’s principle function was to be a priest of creation, to give thanks.... Other creatures had a sense, a reason for being, created to praise God and to witness to His existence” (Marie Eugenie, Chapter of June 22, 1884) (LS. 83) “ the ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us’. God created us with the whole of creation in Love (LS.77). There is an emphasis on freedom and creativity, on the great goodness of God, the merciful God who acts in history to heal, the importance of the virtues and the need for an education for transformation, a transformation of the whole of society. Marie Eugenie understood and felt the deep distress of the society of her time and felt driven to try everything to make Gospel values permeate it. For her ‘the earth was a place for the glory of God’, for Pope Francis too. ((Marie Eugenie, Letter to Lacordaire, “Credo”, cf. Origins 1, 2nd part).

Laudato Si talks of educating ‘for the covenant between humanity and the environment (LS. 209) ‘ Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or secondary aspect of Christian experience’. (LS 218)‘ Only by cultivating sounds



virtues will people be able to make a selfless ecological commitment (LS 211). Many more seeds of this type could be discovered I am sure.

Marie Eugenie prayed that ‘ God would preserve in her the spirit of love for his Kingdom here below’(Marie Eugenie, Lettre au Père d’Alzon, n°1581, vol. 7, non datée) and she prayed ‘for the re-establishment of his kingdom in this world’ ((cf. Marie Eugenie, chapter of December 3, 1882).) Thanks to the Incarnation Christ is present with us and for Marie Eugenie this was the great mystery for her new Congregation. “All things have been created through Him and for Him” Col1.16. From the beginning of the world, but particularly through the Incarnation, the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world as a whole without thereby impinging on its autonomy’ (LS.99). Laudato Si, praise the Lord!

‘Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God’ Luke 12.6. ‘ Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope’ (LS 244)

Let us give thanks for Laudato Si, for our own small contribution to our times and for the gifts of the Spirit given to our Congregation through the insights of Marie Eugenie.

This was written before the extent of the pandemic became apparent. Now the young are no longer on the streets except in some places for doing the shopping for the vulnerable. Everyone is trying to cope as best they can with lockdown and loss. “All of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family “(LS 89) wrote Pope Francis. We are now linked by this global threat to life and livelihood. But be assured once things return to more normal times the prophetic voice of Laudato Si will need to be heard loud and clear for the threat of climate and environmental chaos is even greater than what we are living through now. Stay awake!

Sister JESSICA GATTY
Provincial Referent JPICS Province of Europe
Original: English





Archival photos from the time of the foundation

archive treasures

“...they discovered with their own eyes the vast mission field that awaited the Assumption in that country

In the Archives there are many documents that help us to discover the foundation of the Assumption in India. In particular, the story written by Sr. Alphonse which is available on our site and which will allow you to continue your discovery after reading this article. Mother Josefa Ignacia wrote after her first trip to India : “Why then go to this so Christian country? It is precisely in response to the Church’s call to make this region a home of Christian and missionary formation from which apostles will leave for other parts of India where the needs are pressing (...) In Pala, we are asked to have a university home and a retreat house...” (Mother Josefa Ignacia, Letter of January 9th, 1967 about the foundation in India).

The story of Assumption in India began a few years earlier. The Congregation had finalized the project to establish a Community in this country but this could not be done because the Indian government refused entry to foreigners. Father Jacob Kattackal, who lived in Rome and regularly celebrated the Eucharist in Viale Romania, proposed to his two Sisters, Aleykuuty and Marykutty (who would become Sr. Elsy Thomas and Sr. Mary James), to join the Sisters of the Assumption whose spirituality and internationality touched him. Coming from faraway India, they first stopped in Rome, the heart of the Church, and stayed two weeks in Viale Romania before taking the train to Paris.

Through the same Father Jacob Kattackal, Mother Marie Denyse met the Bishop of Pala who invited the Assumption to open a house of prayer in his diocese. He first promised to send Indian candidates. And he did it! The first "elected group" (Agnes Jacob Kottoor, Rose Joseph Njavalliputhenpurayil, Therese Koottiyaniil, Lizzie Thalanani and Rosa Tresa Ayathmattom) has been prepared for 4 months in India, assisted by the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC) before leaving for Paris on 21 October 1961. The Bishop of Pala continued to send Sisters until 1967.

Even if many of the young people then left the convent, "the first stones for the foundation in India were being chipped and polished in Paris". Some of them also went to England or USA where they were trained in theology but also in Montessori pedagogy, which was then in full expansion.

It was at that time that Mother Josefa Ignacia and Mother Laurentia stopped in India and discovered with their own eyes the vast mission field that

awaited the Assumption in that country. After this contact, the first young Sisters made their perpetual profession in Auteuil on July 25th, 1968. And the first Community was chosen: Sr. Mary James, Sr. Elsy Thomas, Sr. Rose Joseph, Sr. Therese Immaculate, Sr. Ani Jose and Sr. Stella. Sr. Cristina Augusta, a Filipino Sister who was a general counsellor, was appointed Superior but had to wait a few months before obtaining her visa. She joined the Sisters a little later. The first group arrived at Cochin Airport on October 17th, 1968: "What a touching sight it was when the plane landed in Cochin on October 17th. The large crowd of our families and friends filled the small airport. A warm, moving welcome! We cry with joy!" (Letter from Pala Community (India), February 11th, 1969). Among the crowd that welcomed them stood the Vicar of the Bishop of Pala. After the usual visits, the Sisters stayed for a while with the Sisters of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. They finally settled in their first home on November 23rd, 1968. "Right from the beginning they established a pattern of simple and austere life, reminiscent of the life of the first Community of the Assumption in 1839! They were happy with the minimum of facilities in the house. They themselves did the cooking, washing, cleaning and shopping, something unheard of in most convents in Kerala at that time." (Sister Alphonse, Remembrance and gratitude, Story of the Indian Province, written around 1995).

Mother Cristina Augusta finally arrived on January 23rd, 1969; together the Sisters tried to live in contact with the local population, faithful to the contemplative life. In one of their first letters, they share what some priests, friends of the Community, used to say: "Keep your contemplative spirit as it is, it is your strength. This is what is missing in religious life today..." (Letter from Pala Community (India),

February 11th, 1969)

In their first letters, we can find the stories of two meetings that certainly inspired the founders. A hermit, who was living in a Benedictine monastery, came to visit the Community. He was an authentic "poverello" and he left this call to the Community: "He begged us to start our work poorly, according to the Gospel. He says that Pala needs apostles who know how to form young girls to give themselves with a missionary spirit" (Letter from Pala Community (India), February 11th, 1969). Later another seeker of God, Saddhu Ittyavirah, visited them. He lives on the move, without a permanent abode, summing up his life in presence and love offered to the poor, a life that culminates in prayer... "When Saddhu Ittyavirah left us, he especially recommended that we continue our most effective apostolate: the radiance of joy", write the Community of the Priory of Joy (Letter from Pala Community (India), August 6th, 1969). The name of their convent is well chosen!

Thus contemplation, poverty and joy seem to be three important foundation stones during these first months in India, marked, it is true, by change, movement and displacement. The first difficulty, related to obtaining visas, is to find stability. The composition of the Community and the people called upon to provide leadership changed often: Mother Cristina Augusta is replaced after one year by Mother Natividad Maria, another Sister from the Philippines, who obtains a 3-year visa. Sr. Myriam Selz, from France, who arrived in 1972, will come after her. These changes are an opportunity to live the spirit of itinerancy required for the spiritual life.

Another mark of the homelessness to which the Sisters are called is the search to define the mission that God has in store for them. This research is a constant state of mind in the history of the Province. They had been called to found a spiritual retreat house but it is not quite the right place and they would not have enough audience. They changed their mind and opened therefore a hostel for college girls in June 1971. Immediately, there is an "Assumption color": they try to develop the sense of responsibility of young people, by forming character and spirit of service. The students wash the dishes, clean the house, which is not to the taste of all priests and parents. But the personal relationship, the interest for each student and the quality of guidance are very successful. The hostel is soon full!

After Vatican II, the need for a centre for spiritual renewal then emerged. Under the impulse of the Bishop and in collaboration with 4 other Congregations, the Sisters opened Jyothis Theological College on August 17th, 1972. During the first year, 40 Sisters will be resident. The word "Jyothis" comes from Sanskrit and means "star",

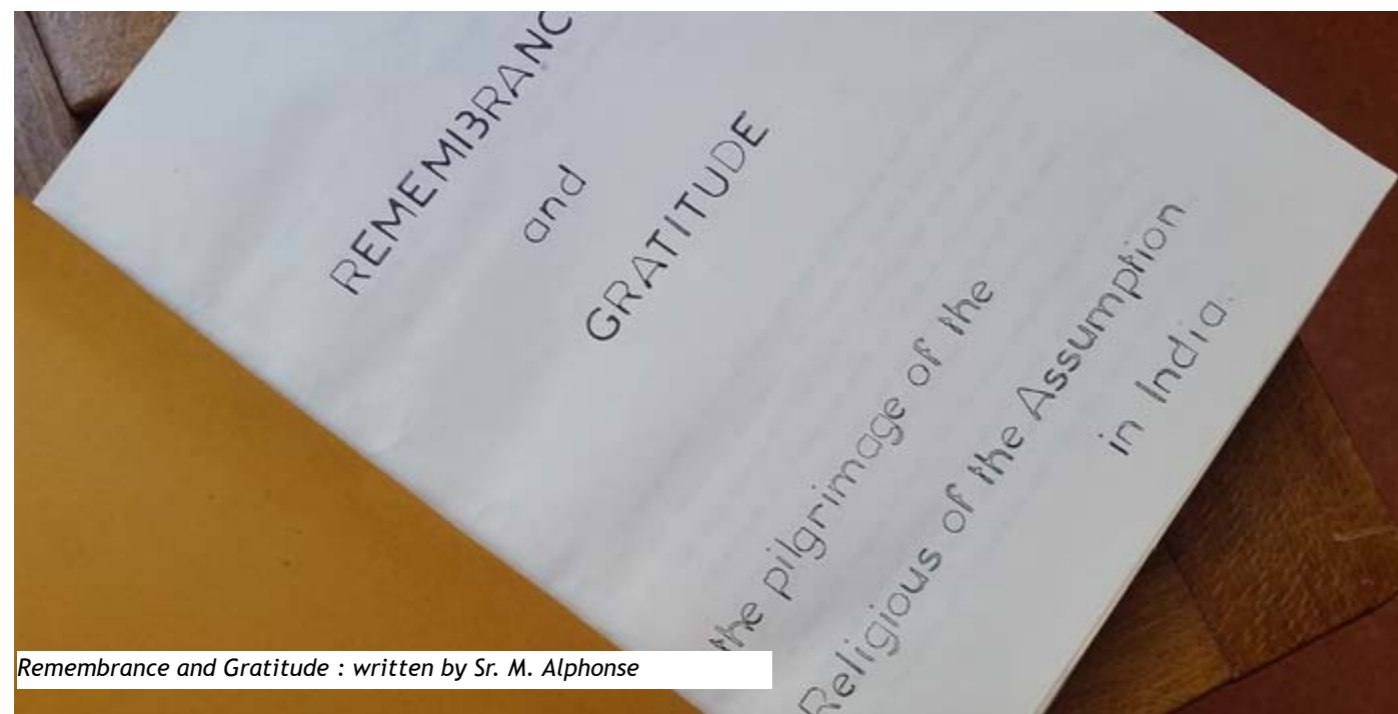


Two of the first Sisters

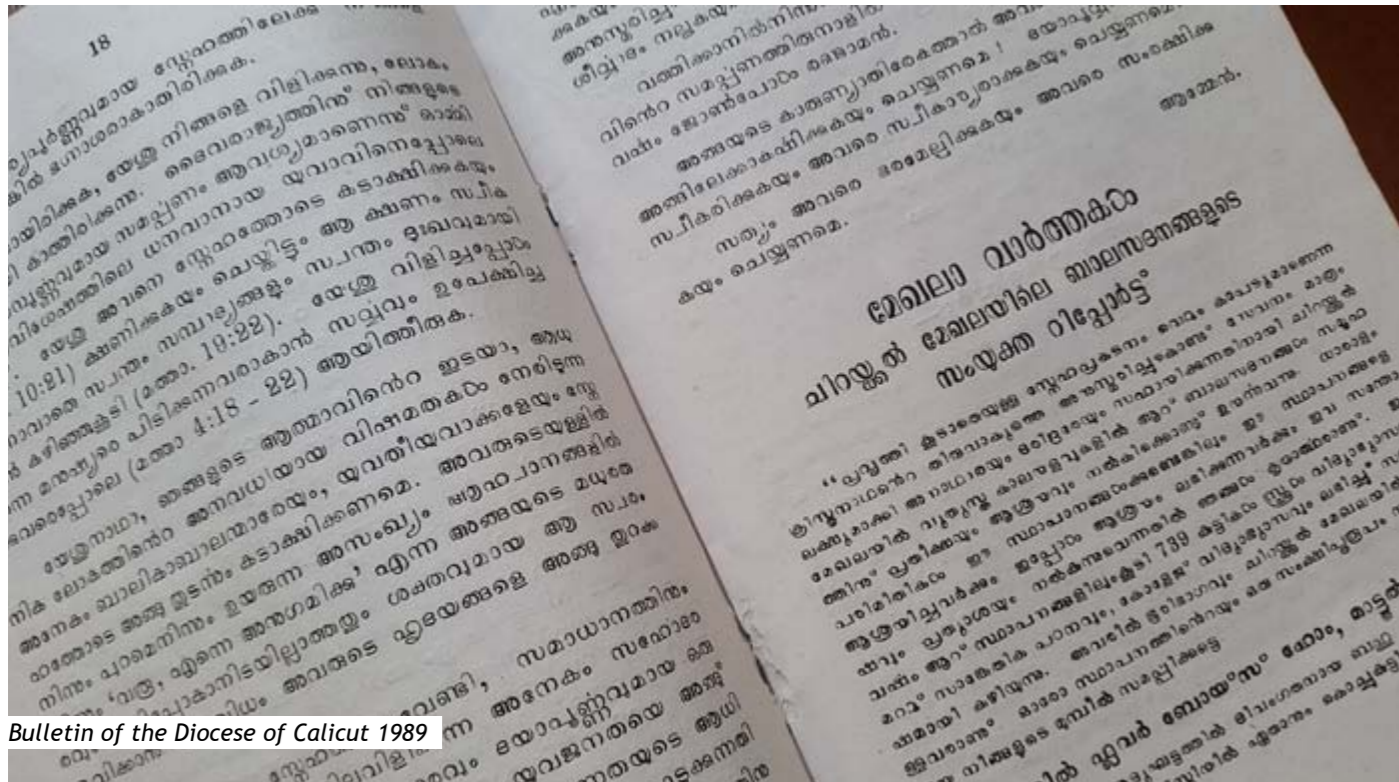
wisdom, "heaven". We can find a link with Mary in her Assumption. Sr. Myriam Selz, upon her arrival, took over the direction of Jyothis College and Sr. Lizzie became the first novice mistress. After the foundation years, life can spread and be shared with new young vocations.

A time of long apostolic exploration is beginning. The Sisters will learn from the experience by tirelessly travelling in this "vast land of infinite variety" (Sister Alphonse, Remembrance and gratitude, Story of the Indian Province, written around 1995).

Many invitations came for a foundation outside Kerala; thanks to the meeting with an enthusiastic priest, the foundation was decided in Punjab, in the diocese of Jullundar; the Bishop was Capuchin. Catholics were few in number and lived in remote villages throughout the diocese. "Families, most of them large, living in one room: 4 clay walls with a flat roof, no windows, only a door (Letter from Pala Community (India), April 1972) Priests were also few in number and therefore carried the burden of a heavy mission. The new Bishop was looking for "a Congregation that would be willing to send 3 or 4 Sisters to share the life of the villagers by settling among them. Through their example as well as through their teaching, the Sisters would gradually raise the standard of living of these poor people." (Letter from Pala Community (India), April 1972). It is therefore for a religious presence in the



Remembrance and Gratitude : written by Sr. M. Alphonse



Bulletin of the Diocese of Calicut 1989

villages, where no other women's Congregation had dare to live before, that Assumption is called. On September 1st, 1972, when the Sisters (Sister Alphonse, Sister Elsy Kattackal, Sister Rosily Kottaram, Sister Jaya as a postulant and another postulant) embarked on this adventure, "faith was the only sustain force and they trusted in the Providence of God and He did not abandon them."

Upon their arrival in Mukstar, they settled in a small two-room apartment on the first floor of a building whose ground floor was used for multiple celebrations. The place was blessed on September 8th and placed under the patronage of Our Lady of the Way. And the journey really began! Priests and catechists accompanied them to the surrounding villages. "Through these visits, they entered a new world, the world of the poor and illiterate." (Letter from Pala Community (India), April 1972). To the most remote villages, they would go by bullock carts, tractors or on foot.

This experience has not been very long but the Sisters were beginning to discern the deep need of Indian society and the desire for a more social perspective for the Assumption, in harmony with the preferential option for the poor that had been reaffirmed during recent international meetings.

In Pala, the scope of the mission was also wider: an English and Malayalam Montessori school had been opened, where rich and poor could be welcome, thanks to a system of fees adapted to the situations of families. The focus was on values education. The college girls hostel, Jyothis College for on-going formation and the Montessori school traced the imprint of the Assumption on this small part of the Indian land. Everything was ready

for a new stage that took shape at the General Chapter, in 1976: India became a Province; Sister Chantal Emmanuel Greindl, Belgian, was appointed Provincial and a first Provincial Chapter was held from 13 to 20 May 1977 in Poona. The same year, the Province decided to choose the Sari as its religious habit: a new sign of proximity with the people.

In the years to come, with the villagers, fishermen, women and children, Assumption in India will never stop seeking to take its part in Christ's Gospel, closed to the poor. In 1970, as the Community of Pala waited to begin its apostolate and lived "the life of the Virgin in the Temple", the Sisters had this anecdote: "Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament begins to shine. The wife of a professor who lives near us offered to give the oil for the lamp of the sanctuary; a gesture which, being quite spontaneous, touched us very much." (Letter from Pala Community (India), July 2nd, 1970) Many are those poor people who, throughout subsequent history, have fed, until today, the lamp of the sanctuary, filling with their faces and stories the prayer and the life of Assumption in India. Do not hesitate to read the continuation of the story by looking for the text written by Sr. Alphonse!

Sister VÉRONIQUE THIÉBAUT
Archivist of the Congregation
Original: French

communication

Evangelizing on the net

Everything about us communicates. Not only the way we speak or express ourselves, but also our way of dressing, our gestures, our way of reacting to every situation. We can use these signs to tell in a non-verbal way how we feel, to transmit an emotion, to cause an effect on our interlocutor, but also to determine how the other person feels.

We are social. We are communitarian. And we need to be close to others. To feel that we are part of a group. And to do that we need to communicate. But how do we reach out to hearts when conversations are "out of date"? In a world in which deep texts are no longer read, in which speed is part of everyday life, in which people's success is based on the number of social relationships. Shouldn't we be present in that digital environment so that we can relate to them? As Pope Francis said at Synod 2018, "Young people ask for authenticity and when they find it in our saints, like Saint Marie-Eugenie, in our smile, our dedication, our joy and our effort to be family, "then they question themselves, set out and decide to take their lives into their own hands.

Only with social networks can they be reached. Not only to young people, but to more and more people who use them every day. Only in this way will we speak their language and be present in their scale of priorities and in their real life, even if it is digital; being aware that we will be sowing sometimes in barren land and sometimes in fertile soil, where one day it will bear fruit.

Only by being present in the analog world will we be able to establish a digital Community with feelings based on trust. Listening to their concerns in order to be able to dialogue with them without staying on the surface but rather going deeper and giving them answers that they will not find anywhere else.

Existential worries, restlessness, grief, sadness... very human states and emotions that we all go through and of which there is overinformation on the net but that without faith and support it is difficult to overcome.

Isn't it being now, in the time of the covid19, a tool for everyone? Contact between families and communities, a source of resources and inspiration, a way of working for many people who have to stay at home to stop the spread of the virus. The Internet and social networks are being a salvation

for jobs and conversations, so that everything continues to work. It brings everyone together, even if we are all locked in.

"We are called to be "the digital Apostle Paul" of the third millennium," Francis tells us. We must be present in this environment. Not only to give an example of our lives, but also to approach and evangelize those who are far away.

Through social networks we can reach many people. We can observe how more and more religious are present and become authentic influencers who promote a way of thinking that is religious but close to the laity and those who are far away.

We must be present to use them as a resource for communion, to bring us closer to experiences far from our life, to rediscover the beauty of our union with others, to encourage encounter. We must use them not as an end, but as a resource. Avoiding doing so exclusively for our benefit or as a source of information. Trying not to remain isolated from our environment. Through social networks, we must convince, especially young people, to get involved in our communities and missions.

Perhaps one day we can move from the isolation and selfishness promoted by current values to a social openness, move from speaking through the Internet to speaking "live", move from a digital culture to a culture of encounter; and, as the Pope says, move from "like" to "amen".

ALMUDENA DE LA TORRE
Communication Team
Original Spanish

Religious

Looking at...



We encourage you to read on the [website](#) the articles that have been sent to us from some of our Provinces regarding the current situation of our Sisters.

We can find each of the summaries under the label: COVID19



Diamond Jubilee at Our Lady of the Assumption School in Daloa (Ivory Coast)

On October 19, 2019, at 9:00 am, the Thanksgiving Eucharist for the Diamond Jubilee took place in the courtyard of the school of Our Lady of the Assumption in Daloa (Ivory Coast).

On the [website](#) we have shared the information of this event which reflected the fruit of all these years of our work on our transformative education with our young people.



The celebration of 25 years of the Assumption in Lithuania

The Jubilee, the jubilation, the joy, and gratitude invited us to celebrate, to recall and to thank the Lord! This year is the 25th anniversary of this inspiration for a foundation or for the return to the desires and faith of our first Lithuanian Sisters who went to either Belgium, Denmark or Italy between the two World Wars to enter the Assumption.

Read the account on the [website](#)



CGP - 2020

The General Plenary Council took place in Paris from February 1 to 20, bringing together Provincials/Regionals from around the world.

Together with the Superior General and her Council, the Provincials and Regional Superiors evaluated the implementation of the decisions of the last General Chapter held in Lourdes in 2018. It was an intense time of communion wherein they shared the life of the Provinces/Region and of the peoples among whom they are inserted, in a spirit of prayer and discernment.

The mission of the General Plenary Council is to strengthen the union of hearts and spirit in the Congregation. It evaluates, in discernment, the

implementation of the decisions of the General Chapter. In it, the different Provinces open themselves to the general good of the Congregation and of the mission, in view of the great problems of the world. In this way it ensures the missionary dynamism of the Congregation. It is also a moment when formation takes place.

It is composed of the Superior General and her Council, and the Provincial/Regional Superiors. It is convoked and presided over by the Superior General. It meets two or three times between two General Chapters (RV 101)

Read the account on the website.

A new foundation in Rwanda



In September, responding to the call of the General Chapter of 2018 to go to the peripheries, a new Community in the Rwanda-Chad Province was born.

The Religious of the Assumption in the new Community of BERE, St. Francis of Assisi, tell the story of this great beginning for us on the website and we join them in their thanksgiving for this new birth and for their settling in their new mission.

The Religious of the Assumption celebrate 25 years in Vietnam

The Sisters in Vietnam celebrated 25 years of religious presence on November 30, 2019.

"This is the day the Lord has made, we rejoice and are glad..." 25 years of the Assumption's presence in Vietnam... 25 years of blessings. It was an important moment to thank God for His many blessings. He is the God of history, Who accompanies us and blesses us on our personal and Community journey.





Direct their flight, but don't clip their wings



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