

Auteuil, 19 March 2020

Feast of Saint Joseph

Dearest sisters,

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 communication 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 workers 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.

For both publications, both Sisters and lay people are invited to write. We count on you to encourage sharing your resources. They are also tools that concretely participate 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.

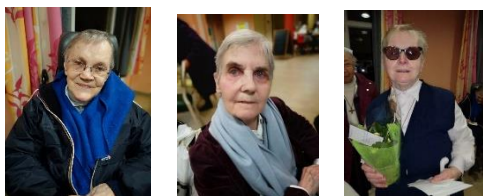
From January 24 to 26, we welcomed the members of the **International Secretariat of the Assumption Family (SIJIPC)** for its annual meeting. On the RA side, from JIPC-S, Anna Pagani, Viviane Sawadogo and Sandra Durán participated. There was also Claire Myriam from BGSD. You have already received in 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. Thérèse Maylis** in the presence of her family, the elders of Lübeck and those close to Auteuil.

On the same day, sisters went to the EPHAD of Etampes to celebrate **the diamond and golden jubilee 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 inaugurated the Presence of the Lord in the oratory of the House.

The whole celebration was marked by simplicity, 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 adhoc formation team** - composed of Sisters Clare Teresa Tjader, Carmen Escribano, Leela Kottoor, 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 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 videoconference 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. Inigo at CGP 2020.

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.

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

"In You, all our sources!" Ps 86 Last third Sunday of Lent, Jesus, tired from walking and 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.

Your Sisters,

Rekha, Sandra, Isabelle, Marthe and Irene