

# ECHO



*from the Generalate*

*March 2011*

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## **Visits of the General Government:**

### **The Superior General**

During the months of October and November 2010, Sr. Valsala George continued her canonical visits. She went to the Netherlands from the 2nd to the 5th October 2010 and was accompanied by Sr. Anne-Marie Berckmans. She met all the Sisters there. Then she went with Sr. Scholastique Meta to the Central African Republic from the 27th October to the 4th November 2010. She visited the two communities: in Bangui and in M'Baiki (founded in October 2009) – both communities belong to the St Bernard Province. Taking advantage of her presence in Africa, the provincial superiors of the two Congolese provinces came to meet her for a working session. And finally, from the 9th till 16th November 2010, she went to the Region of Rwanda where she met the Sisters of the communities of Butare and Ndera.

She participated in the celebration of the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind, on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2010. Sr. Valsala George appreciated the path followed by this institute since its foundation by the Sisters of Charity of J.M. Sr. Angèle Mutonkole and Sr Anne-Marie Dhooghe accompanied her.

**The General Councillors:** Sr. Elsy Paul went to Vietnam with Sr. Françoise Petit, the Provincial Superior of the Belgian South Province, then to the Philippines, from 28<sup>th</sup> October 2010 till 13<sup>th</sup> November. The aim was to look into the possibilities regarding the formation of Vietnamese postulants and on the evolution of the initial formation of the inter-Asian Noviciate at Tagatay.

### **Activities of the General Bursar**

Sr. Anne-Marie Dhooghe went to the Region of Mali from the 3rd till 18th October 2010 as part of her task.

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> till the 20th January 2011, she animated a session for the provincial bursars of the provinces of Asia. This took place at the provincial house of Colombo (Sri Lanka). Our Sisters appreciated this formative session very much. It inspired them to render an even more efficient service to the Congregation in their Provinces.

The international economic and financial commission takes place at the generalate from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011. We wish each of its members a fruitful session.

### **Preparation for the General Chapter 2011**

**Poverty experience:** Sr Valsala George received some informal echoes. It shows that most of the participants of the General Chapter have already fulfilled this special mission. There are even some other Sisters who wanted to take part in this experience so as to participate more closely in the preparation of the General Chapter. No doubt, the sharing of these diverse experiences will be a source of enrichment for the communities which will benefit from it, and perhaps an invitation for the others.

**The preparation** is intensified almost everywhere in our Congregation. Some Sisters are busy organising the last details of their trip while others are finalizing the report they will present during the chapter. Here in the Generalate, we are also in the final stage of preparations and giving finishing touch to the practical aspects. We look forward to welcoming the participants to Steyl (in the Netherlands) for the chapter, which will take place from 29<sup>th</sup> April to 26<sup>th</sup> May 2011. May this Chapter give us a deeper understanding of what it means to live our charism in today's context. We count on your prayerful support.

### **Community of the Generalate**

On 24th November, the staff of different services of the Generalate – archives, bursar's office, and secretariat – met in Brussels for a special day. The programme included: visit to the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind, meeting the community of the generalate, visit of the house and a meal. It proved to be a very nice day allowing several of them to discover that all services rendered within the Congregation shows some form of participation at the realisation of its mission.

### **Celebrations of the “Triest Year “**

On 26th September 2010, there was a Eucharistic celebration in the magnificent Cathedral of St. Michel and Gudule (Brussels). The Eucharist was carefully prepared and united the big “Triest Family “: the Sisters of the Childhood of Jesus, the Brothers of Charity and the Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary. It was presided by Mgr A.J. Leonard (Archbishop of Brussels-Malines), Mgr L. Van Looy (Bishop of Ghent) and Mgr A. Jousten (Bishop of Liège). Numerous friends of the different congregations joined us in this event. Among our distinguished guests were of course some representatives of the marginalized who were so dear to Father Triest. After the celebration, all met in a hall near the Cathedral to continue the festivities.

The Sisters of the Childhood of Jesus celebrate this year the 175th anniversary of their foundation. On the occasion of this anniversary, they organised an academic session in Ghent, at the hall of the Brothers of Charity on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2010. Sr Valsala was one of the distinguished guests of Sr Jacqueline Eggermont, the General Superior, not only because she is the General Superior of a “Sister Congregation” but also out of friendship.

### **News about the Provinces and Regions**

#### **Province of Pakistan**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2011, **Mr Shahbaz Bhatti**, 42 years old, a Pakistani Catholic minister for Minorities, was killed because of the ideas he held. He was the only Christian minister in the government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Many Christians agree to say that he was “a real martyr”. In his spiritual testament one can read: *“High positions and responsibilities in the government were proposed to me. They asked me to abandon my fight, but I have always refused, even though I know that I risk my life. My answer has always been the same: ‘No, I want to serve Jesus as a man for the people’. I am no longer afraid (...). I do not want to be popular; I do not want to hold a position of power: I only want a place at the feet of Jesus”*.

**The floods which struck the country** more than six months ago made 20 million victims, damaged or destroyed more than 2 million houses and devastated more than 2 million hectares of cultivated land. Tens of millions of displaced people have still no suitable place where they can live and protect themselves against the hardships of the winter; the sanitary conditions in which they live prove to be very precarious. Today, all effort is concentrated on rebuilding the places. Our Sisters are present on all fronts with courage and determination. Together with the Major Superiors, Sr Arsene, the Provincial Superior continues to be part of a team that coordinates the activities to provide help to the

population who is badly stricken. We appreciate her deep commitment to this mission. Once more, this event has shown that solidarity among our provinces is not an idle word: a warm and heartfelt “thank you” for the financial aid which you have generously sent to Pakistan. Today, the Pakistani people still needs our compassion, our prayer, and our care.

### **Province of Sri Lanka**

At least 64 persons have died as a result of the monsoon rains which were exceptionally heavy and more than one million people had to flee their houses. Actually, most of them got back to their houses, but 1, 30,000 people remain in camps for the destitute and stricken. According to the official figures, 11, 32,654 people were struck by these floods. 1,93,742 people who were struck had already found refuge in one of the 703 temporary centres for displaced people, put up in the country after the first wave of floods in January.

The floods due to monsoon rains striking Sri Lanka for more than two months already have damaged a lot of properties. It is estimated to have cost more than 600 million dollars (442 millions of Euros). The government will spend 33 billion rupees (300 million dollars) on urgent repairs to 50, 000 houses but according to the minister, “the global amount of the damages is estimated to be at least double. The damage to the rice fields alone reaches 13 billion rupees”.

Each one of us is invited to keep in mind the serious preoccupations of the people of Sri Lanka and especially of our Sisters: since a few years already, no hardships have spared them!

### **Province of Delhi**

At the end of 2010, a new community started at Kathalguri, Assam, one of the States in the North-East of India. The Sisters collaborate with the Jesuit Fathers at the service of the rural population; this they do by providing education, health care, social and pastoral care, and a hostel for young girls who are poor. Let us pray for our Sisters so that they continue to bear witness to God’s Love in a prophetic way – in the place where they are called to be.

### **Region of Mali**

The community of Koutienso is happy to welcome a new member: Sr. Symphorose Kadd’a, a new missionary coming from the St Bernard Province (R.D.Congo). Sr. Symphorose arrived in her new community on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 2011. As a nurse, she replaces Sr. Marthe Batuma Bafuidinsoni who returned to her country to continue her formation. We thank the St. Bernard Province for their generosity and wish that the new missionary might open herself more and more for the Word of the One who sends her.

Sr Alice N’Kazi Mutundu, belonging to the St Bernard Province, received a new task in her Province.

### **Region of Rwanda**

Sr. Athanasie Mukangoga has left Rwanda temporarily in February to continue her studies as a nurse in Burundi. We send her our best wishes so that she can prepare herself with generosity for her mission.

### **Provinces of St Bernard and St Vincent de Paul**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2011, the provincial teams of the Provinces of St. Bernard and St. Vincent de Paul (R.D.Congo) met for a week. The venue was Cana, Lubumbashi. In the course of this meeting, the two teams discussed questions and issues of common interest and took necessary decisions.

### **Interprovincial Noviciates**

In the two Interprovincial noviciates, i.e. in Mali and in the Philippines, the young girls are preparing themselves fervently for the first profession foreseen for next June. While waiting to get to know the names of the happy chosen ones, we could already pray for each and every one of them as well as for their novice mistresses. May they all be able to discern with an inner freedom and in the light of the Holy Spirit what might be God's plan for them and for our Congregation.

### **Anglo Irish Province**

Sr. Thomas O'Connor is no more. She passed away peacefully on the 4th February 2011 in Moore Abbey (Ireland). Though she was born in Ireland, her availability to the Lord brought her to Australia, Belgium and England in the fulfilment of her different missions. Totally dedicated to the Congregation, she assumed the task of novice mistress, District Superior, General Councillor (1975 till 1981) and until her retirement in 2004, she worked in the parish. Woman of deep spirituality, shining with goodness, she sometimes instilled into the staff that cared for her a desire to pray with her. We will always remember with joy her humour and good mood which were so typical of her. It would seem she was also an ardent fan of football... and while we are remembering her, let us thank Our Lord for the gift He gave to our Congregation and let us ask Him that we may discover the message He gives us through her life.

### **Lent and Easter 2011**

This year, the celebration of the Paschal Mystery takes us directly to the General Chapter, bringing the message of hope into our Congregation. May it be for each one of us a time of profound listening and of an authentic conversion. May He enkindle in us the desire to "do whatever He will tell us" and that through this He prepares our whole Congregation to be reborn with a prophetic audacity and to put ourselves wholeheartedly at the service of the most destitute.

We extend our warm greetings to each SCJM on the occasion of the feast of Easter 2011. The words of St. Paul are very appropriate:

*"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have the power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."*  
(Eph. 3:16-19)

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