

Information Bulletin of the Missionaries of Christ Jesus

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Visit of the General Government to Cameroon and Chad

Dear Sisters and Friends,

Once again, "Happy New Year 2025 to all of you."

I would like to share with you a little about my visit to Chad and Cameroon. Overall, the visit went well and all the sisters are doing well in their various missions. This time the visit was not only for the sisters, because we also had meetings with the various teams that work with our sisters: the parish councils, the apostolic teams, the priests of some communities, other close collaborators, and visits to the various authorities. This also allowed me to see how the sisters are involved in their various activities and the impact of their mission on the people. In almost all the communities, both in Chad and Cameroon, the sisters and their missions are well appreciated by the people, despite some difficulties.

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On October 14th, I left Madrid for Cameroon and on the 15th, at around 5 in the morning, I arrived in Yaounde. Adele, who was supposed to arrive the day before, was unable to do so due to an error in her Cameroonian visa. That same day, at 10am, we had an appointment with the Archbishop of Yaounde to present him with the application documents to open a new community in Yaounde. He welcomed us warmly and signed the documents. The next day Adele arrived and we

began our visit to the Yaounde community.

As you know, the Yaounde community is a new community of student sisters. The sisters have bought a piece of land on the outskirts of Yaounde, in the village of Ndong, and a house was built to serve as a student community and also as a temporary shelter for the sisters. At the moment there are 2 students, Celine who is studying nursing and Niclette who is studying medical imaging. In addition to their studies, they also participate in the pastoral life of the Christian community. Xanh (nursing) and Rossette (laboratory) have just finished their studies at the Catholic University. Rossette was on leave in the Congo, and Xanh was preparing for the 30-day retreat before her final profession. We also had a meeting with the parish council, who expressed their joy at the arrival of the sisters in their village.

On October 22nd, we took the night bus to Ngambe-Tikar. On the 23rd, at about 9 a.m., we reached the other side of Ngambe-Tikar, but we could not cross because the river had overflowed and we did not want to go over the ferry. Thank God, by noon we were finally able to cross and at about 1 p.m. we arrived in the community. The sisters and the children of the primary school of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus were waiting for us with songs of joy, which made us forget the tiredness of the trip. In Ngambe-Tikar, the sisters work in the primary school and the nursery, while Pamela, who is now doing the international course in Spain, takes care of two primary schools and a nursery. The sisters have a small dispensary where Laurentine and Marisa work. Annette is more involved in youth ministry and catechism, and also collaborates with the nursery school in the development of teaching materials.

They are all also very involved in parish ministry, and the parish priest is very happy to have sisters in the parish. He considers their presence to be the best gift he has ever received.

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On October 28th we left Ngambe-Tikar and on the 29th we arrived in Yaounde to prepare for our trip to Chad. On October 30th we took the flight to N'Djamena. That evening we arrived in N'Djamena and the next morning we had a meeting with the Archbishop of N'Djamena, who also welcomed us

with great joy. There are three sisters in this community of N'Djamena: Pola works in the hospital of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Apostles in the Laboratory; Ereka works in the Bishop's house as a caretaker and Claudine works in the school of the Comboni Fathers. Apart from these activities, the sisters are also involved in parish ministry: catechism, choir, vocational group...

On November 5th, we took the Ba-illi road towards the south of Chad and despite the poor condition of the road after heavy rains we arrived safely. There are three sisters in this community: Yvonne is the headmistress of the St. Francis Xavier primary school, which has more than 300 pupils, Henriette works with the group of widows and H'yip works in the girls' boarding school. The three sisters are also involved in parish ministry. All three in the Ba-illi community were new, having just changed teams. We saw them happy and enthusiastic about their new mission.

On November 11th we left Ba-illi and on the 14th we left for Abeche, in the north of Chad. In Abeche the sisters have a nursery school with almost 200 children, Lucie is the headmistress of the school. Florence and Nathalie work in the school as teachers. Therese Mulumbu is the headmistress of the parish Catholic primary school, in collaboration with the Comboni Fathers. Jacquie works at the Welcome Centre and also helps in the nursery as a teacher. As in all the other communities, they are also involved in parish pastoral care.

From 22nd to 23rd November, we had a meeting with all the sisters from Chad in N'Djamena and we ended it with a Mass celebrated by the Archbishop of N'Djamena.

On 25th November, very early in the morning, we took the bus to the north of Cameroon. Around 10am we arrived in Bongor, which is located on the border between Chad and Cameroon, separated only by the Chari River. On the other side of the river the Bogo sisters' car was waiting for us. We crossed the river by motorboat and, after the formalities, we took the road to Bogo. At around 4pm we arrived in Bogo, where the sisters and young people were waiting for us with songs and dances. We were taken straight to the parish, where the priest and the other parishioners were waiting for us. What a welcome! After singing, dancing and welcoming us, we headed to the community house.

The main activity of the Bogo community is the health centre. The community is made up of 4 sisters: Matomina, who is now in Spain due to health problems, Michel, Marie Jeanne and Florence Biama. In the absence of Tuka, who was in charge of the centre, Michel took charge of the coordination until the arrival of Xanh and Rossette, who have just finished their studies at the UCAC in nursing and laboratory sciences. Florence works in the cash register of the centre and Marie Jeanne supervises and trains more than thirty girls in dressmaking and literacy; she also helps out at the centre from time to time. In addition, all three of them participate in parish pastoral work, as in all our communities. The community also oversees a group of ten lay Missionaries of Christ Jesus who have just started and to whom I had the opportunity to speak a little about our charism and mission. On December 3rd, we had a beautiful Eucharistic celebration of St. Francis Xavier with the MCJ lay group and in the afternoon we shared a meal with the local authorities, parishioners and the staff of the center. It was a wonderful day and an opportunity to introduce others to our patron St Francis Xavier.

On the 4th we left for Zamay, 100 km from Bogo. The sisters and parishioners were waiting for us at the entrance of the parish with songs and dances that accompanied us to the community. There are 3 sisters in this mission, but at the moment there were only 2 sisters, Micheline and Promese, since Louise is also in Spain. At Zamay, the sisters run a 2-year training centre for young girls who have not been to school, where they learn dressmaking, literacy and other skills that will prepare them to take charge of their lives in a society where the education of young girls is neglected and women are not taken into account. Micheline is the head of the centre and Promese is a teacher at the parish nursery school, who also helps out at the centre from time to time. The centre currently has at least 38 girls, most of them boarders, as they are still in school.

On the 10th we flew to Yaounde to prepare for Xanh's perpetual vows ceremony, which took place on December 15th. It was a beautiful ceremony which was accompanied by a good number of our Vietnamese brothers and sisters. On December 17th we had a meeting with all the sisters from Cameroon to close the visit, and on December 18th I left home at midnight, since my flight to Spain was leaving at 4 in the morning. This is, more or less,

the summary of what the visit has been like, and I thank God for everything that the sisters are doing in our various missions in Chad and Cameroon. Although most of the places where our missions take place are not easy due to the arid climate or insecurity, the sisters are conscientious in their missions and their presence among these suffering people is a great testimony and a hope for people. Let us accompany our sisters in Chad and Cameroon in our prayers, so that they may always keep their passion for mission alive. A very warm hug, Your sister Alphonsine

1ª foto: Hermanas en el Camerún



2ª foto: Hermanas



Adios con el corazon!

Gloria Indurain

27-10-2024



Gloria Indurain was born in Uztarroz, Roncal, (Navarra) in 1929

After her training as a teacher, she worked in various schools in Navarra. She entered the Institute and took her vows on September 14th, 1966.

After her juniorate she was assigned to Venezuela on December 22nd, 1967, and worked at the Colegio San Pedro in Caracas.

On March 7th, 1972 she went to Bolivia and soon became loved by everyone for her joy, availability and generosity.

On March 9th, she took over the direction of the “El Salvador” primary school replacing Elena Angel. In 1973 she took over the direction of the Obispo Anaya School. Both schools were owned by Fe y Alegría.

In the educational centers of Cochabamba, they only worked in the mornings, so in the afternoons Gloria began sewing with a machine in the parish hall next to our house and there, with the help of a teacher from the school, we started some sewing and tailoring classes for women, which was the seed of the Obispo Anaya Adult Center and later, expanding its studies and subjects, it is today the Maria Camino Center.

She worked in women's groups...with catechists, visiting communities and staying there. Because of her cheerful, simple character, she won the sympathy of the people, even at the beginning in Obispo Anaya with the visit of a minister from La Paz to the School, she danced the cueca with him.

In 1976, assigned to Santiago de Machaca, she was part of the initial team, with Carmen Morales and Elena Angel in the Pastoral of the Prelature of Corocoro, Pampas de los Andes, Department of La Paz, at an altitude of 3800

m. The language, culture and customs were Aymara. Their life and economy: very limited traditional crops (potatoes, quinoa, chuño) with family livestock, llamas, alpacas, sheep... for subsistence. It was a very cold mission, on the border with Peru and Chile, without electricity and with water from a well.

The sisters served a large area with three parishes without a priest where they carried out pastoral work, especially training catechists and doing social work, visiting the communities for several days and doing development work with women. Gloria liked this adult education more and she was enthusiastic about the new foundation.

Her main task, in addition to the team and accompaniment of the Catechists and the Christian Communities was non formal Education, primarily with groups of women, called Mothers' Clubs, organized by Caritas through the Vicariate, which consisted of religious formation, human values, techniques with native fabrics, sewing, painting, celebration and festivities, and accompanying families. Another important activity was the training of grassroots promoters, so that they could serve groups in their own communities.

Cooperative of artisanal textiles: With these groups we tried to form a kind of cooperative of “artisanal textiles” with the highly valued alpaca wool and hand-woven fabrics, “everything good, so pretty and valuable”. When we presented it in the City of La Paz, they treated us very well, on the other hand, when the peasants took it, they didn’t even listen to us. “We went into crisis.”

From 1985 to 1987 Gloria did a service in Javier.

Then she joined Colquiri, in the work with the women of the camp that Elena Angel had been leading until then. She expressed herself thus in January 1988: “Our companions were the Passionist Fathers. The relationship with them was very good and the pastoral work was carried out, planning together in accordance with the guidelines of



the Prelature, zone meetings, parish, etc. We accompanied each other to go out to the field where the Fathers were in charge of the formation of the catechists and we were in the groups for the promotion of women. At the end we all participated together in the Eucharistic celebration.

She was in Tiraque, Riberalta, returned to the Altiplano... in 1992 in Yucumo. Also in pastoral work she accompanied the animators, visited families... she held Sunday celebrations, since the parish priest went once a month, also preparing and administering baptisms.

She also began work with women with Asun.

She ended up in Cochabamba helping to close the house in Rumicerco and finally in the community of Alalay working in the San Jose asylum. She returned to Spain in 2018.

Due to her great AVAILABILITY, Gloria was in almost all the communities, always willing to lend a hand.

It should be noted that she was always a good companion in community, creating a good atmosphere. Above all, her sensitivity and care of the sick sisters should be highlighted.



Catalina Claverol Mut, 6th of November 2024

Catalina was born in Palma de Mallorca on June 5th, 1924. Her parents were Jose Claverol Fenosa and Maria Mut Serra. Her siblings: Teresa, Romualdo, Maria and Magdalena.

Catalina did her high school and teaching in Palma.

She also studied as an intern at the general hospital in Palma.



A friend of hers, sister of Magdalena Cortes, told her about the Missionaries of Christ Jesus and she liked them.

- Catalina arrived in Javier at the age of 25, where she did her novitiate. She was a good nurse and took care of the dispensary in Javier.
- After her vows, she studied tropical medicine in Antwerp.
- In 1964 she was assigned to Zaire: she travelled with Ma.Del Carmen Ruiz Cortazar.
- In 1966 in the dispensary in Imbela: she began to work as a nurse and in the Maternity Hospital.
- In 1968 she was in charge of the dispensary of the Mission in Panzi.
- In 1970 Catalina was assigned to Suka: she visited the people and looked after orphaned children.
- She was assigned to the Mission in Kole: she worked in the pharmacy at the hospital in Kole.
- Catalina was assigned to Dekese in 1986 where she also took care of the pharmacy.



- From 2000 to 2008, she was assigned to the Novitiate of Kimwenza: In addition to her culinary talents, Catalina was very skilled at raising rabbits. Their sale was a very important source of income for the community.
- She returned to Spain in 2011.
- She was assigned to the community of Javier, where her sister Magdalena accompanied her for a few years.
- Catalina has never been a person of many words. She was very responsible, hard-working, active, generous and creative in everything she did.

We had the joy of accompanying Catalina celebrating her 100th birthday

- lightly, walking with her walker,
- smiling
- and full of peace



Marita Fernandez S.

27-12-2024

Marita Fernandez Salgueiro was born in Santiago de Compostela (A Coruña) on May 22nd, 1930. She was the only daughter of Manuel and Concepcion.

She studied in Santiago: She had a degree in Chemistry and Higher Religious Culture.



She was an active member of Catholic Action where she worked with Ana Maria Diaz and Marina Val. It was an opportunity for her to meet the MCJ and share her missionary vocation.

She entered the Institute on September 14th, 1957 and pronounced her first vows in Javier on March 14th, 1960. She left immediately for Venezuela and worked teaching at the Colegio de San Pedro while waiting for a visa for India.

Upon receiving it, she travelled to India in December 1965. She made her final vows on March 14th, 1966 in Pune, India.

She taught in several Missions in India East, especially in Tura, where she is still remembered according to a testimony received today: *“In Tura, several students from our St. Xavier’s School are sending feelings of solace and giving thanks for her life and mission, especially in those years in the 60s and 70s.”*

Marita rejoined the Venezuelan mission in 1981. She dedicated herself to teaching and catechesis.

She returned to Spain in 1991. From 1993 to 2004 she went to Santiago to take care of her family. After the death of her father, she joined the community in Pamplona and from 2018 she came to Javier.

We collect more testimonies *“Thank you for your life, Marita. You had a very good eye for small jobs. How much advice and guidance you had given us...”*

We remember Marita's simplicity, her practical sense, her sociability, her love of nature and we thank God for her life.

With a firm step and a heart of light.
She crossed borders feeling the virtue
Sowing Love in distant lands,
She left a mark on afflicted souls.
Her voice like a forum in dark nights
turned to the lost with pure words
Marita, missionary, noble and beautiful
soul,
your light will continue to shine
eternally in a star.



Santiago saw you born
Oh! Pure soul and in distant lands,
your spirit assures
With a heart full of Galicia, you always dreamed of returning
Now you rest happily in peace, you run through your land.
Marita, missionary, Angel of the Lord.
Your soul found peace in another place.
Forever: my Marita. Your caregivers send you a kiss
and we will remember you



School of Missionary Formation

MCI Internacional Course.



Dear Sisters of the Peace of Christ,

At the end of our second stage of formation, we are once again sharing with you our experience at the missionary school. Indeed, the doors of the Missionary Formation School opened on September 17th, 2024, with a mass presided over by the Bishop of Bilbao, Monsignor **Joseba Segura Etxezarraga**, President of the Episcopal Commission for Mission. The missionary training lasted until December 5, the day the graduates received their end-of-course diplomas. On December 7 and 8, we traveled to Javier for the Eucharistic celebration that marked the end of our activities.

When we started school, due to the short time we had been in Spain, we did not understand anything, so we had to use the phone all the time; Google Translate was our companion. Thank God, little by little, after about two weeks, we became familiar with the way the teachers spoke. The kindness, attention, support, encouragement and patience of the teachers and our classmates helped us to make great progress.

This course has been comprehensive. With all the topics covered, we have felt renewed; this time permitted us to deepen our foundations, it helped us to see the world as a whole not only with a critical eye but also with compassion. The content of the course provided us with a solid foundation and gave us the necessary tools to work more effectively, to be Missionaries of Christ Jesus more creative and attentive to the signs of the times. Among the twenty topics we covered were: reading reality, missionary spirituality, migration, health, ecology, interreligious dialogue, technology, etc. They gave us a sense of direction and reminded us that mission is a gift which comes from God and is communicated to us by Jesus Christ with the strength of his Spirit, and that mission is possible when we work in unity, when we build bonds of peace that allow each human being to feel loved by God. This formation has enriched our missionary know-how and practice; we feel better prepared and are able to be more creative and practical in our future pastoral work.

Thank you to each of the sisters for your prayers and encouragement so that this second stage of our formation would end in an atmosphere of fraternity, peace and joy. We continue to count on your support, both spiritual and moral, for what awaits us.

“Christian hope is a gift from God that fills our lives with joy,” says Pope Francis. In this year of hope, let us believe that the Lord will increase our missionary zeal, so that we can be signs of hope for our brothers and sisters.

An embrace,
Teresa Huyen, Marie
Huong y Louise Ngondo



WE WALK TOWARDS HOSPITALITY GOD WALKS WITH HIS PEOPLE

On Saturday, September 28th, at 5:00 p.m., the Jesuit Migrant Service (SJM) of Almeria invited us to participate in a 5 km Contemplative and Solidarity Walk, **FOR HOSPITALITY AND MIGRATIONS.**

The starting point was in San Isidro de Níjar to go to Pueblo Blanco, where “the Arrupe House”, the SJM Headquarters is located.

It was a Walk made up of four Stages, and each one marked by a small reflection, which as we were “making the journey” was shared with the companion on the journey and at other times it was a moment of contemplative silence, observing all that immense “sea of plastics” that was accompanying us along the way...

The first moment was in a Hall of the new shelters that the SJM have built to house migrants that they are taking out of the settlements of Níjar.

And there, all around (there were about 40 of us, including religious men and women who work with migrants, lay people, and some of the children from the Centre. There was also a Muslim woman who works with the Ursulines and the Jesuits in Roquetas de Mar). We began the Beginning of the Way.

The first moment was a tribute to Sister Araceli Fuentes, Mercedarian of Charity, who gave her life in service to migrants and who has already completed her journey on this earth. She has gone ahead of us to the Kingdom and now accompanies our journey. Her Sisters gave an emotional account of their mission and dedication in this whole area.

Then, a brief introduction to the housing and hospitality programme of SJM-Almeria.

And finally an invitation to this journey, in solidarity and contemplation.

FIRST STOP: TOWARDS THE TRUE HOMELAND

The Synodal Church rediscovers its itinerant nature as the People of God on a journey through history, pilgrim, we might say “migrant” towards the Kingdom of Heaven. (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 49) The reference to the biblical account of the Exodus, which presents the People of Israel on their journey towards the Promised Land, is evocative: a long journey from slavery to freedom. Similarly, it is possible to see in the migrants of our time and of other times, a living image of the People of God on their journey towards the eternal Homeland. A passage from the Koran was also read.

SECOND STOP: GOD WALKS WITHIN US.

Here we are invited to Silence.

Many migrants experience God as a travelling companion, a guide and an anchor of salvation. They entrust themselves to Him before leaving and turn to Him in times of need. They seek comfort and strength in Him in their difficult journeys. They pray and trust...

God not only walks with His people, but also in His people. He identifies with men and women in their journey through history – especially the least, the poor, the marginalised – as an extension of the mystery of His Incarnation.

THIRD STOP: GOD WALKS WITH US

The two images – that of the Exodus and that of migrants – have certain similarities. Like the people of Israel in the time of Moses, migrants often flee from situations of oppression and abuse, from insecurity and discrimination, from a lack of development projects. And just like the Hebrews in the desert, migrants also encounter many obstacles on their way: they are tested by thirst and hunger; they are exhausted by work and illness; they are tempted by despair.

But the fundamental reality of the Exodus, of every Exodus, is that God precedes and accompanies the journey of his people and of all his children at any time and place. The presence of God in the midst of the People is a certainty of the history of Salvation: “The Lord your God is with you, and he will not abandon you nor leave you forsaken” Dt. 31,6

FOURTH STOP: I WAS A FOREIGNER AND YOU WELCOMED ME

The encounter with the migrant, as with every brother in need, is also an encounter with Christ. It is He who knocks at our door, hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick and imprisoned, asking us to help him. The Last Judgement that Matthew recounts in chapter 25 leaves no room for doubt: “I was passing through, and you welcomed me...”; and again, “I assure you that as you did it to one of the least of my brothers, you did it to me...”

Every encounter, along the way, is an opportunity to encounter the Lord, and it is an opportunity full of Salvation, because Jesus is present in the brother or sister who needs our help. In this sense, the poor save us, because they allow us to encounter the face of the Lord.

ARRIVAL. TO CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

We arrived at the “Arrupe” house, the SJM-Almeria headquarters and also a place of welcome for migrants who have abandoned the settlements. There, all in a circle, we prayed with the prayer of Pope Francis for the 110th World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

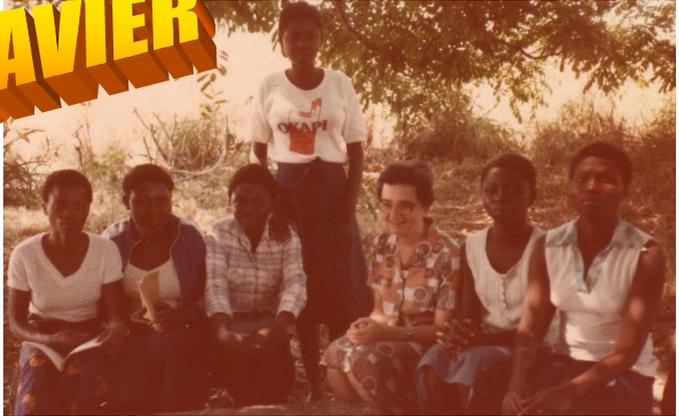
And there, in the courtyard of the house, we shared a small snack prepared by the children and the Foundation.

It was another moment of being, sharing and getting to know this whole reality closely with these spaces of prayer and encounter, where one feels that one is not alone and that God walks in the sufferings, joys and hopes of so many brothers and sisters.

CAJUS



FROM JAVIER



A few months ago was the day of migrants, but it is not necessary that it be their day, besides even if it is not their day there is much talk about them. For some it is good, for others it is an evil that must be eradicated in some way. The governments do not agree, on the other hand, there are charitable souls who welcome them as best they can according to their possibilities.

I have been a missionary in the Congo and there is an incident that after many years still moves me and in this circumstance pushes me to publish it especially dedicated to those who fear or detest that they come to invade us according to their opinion.

It happened in Kole, a town in the center of the D.R. of Congo. One of my jobs was to take care of some children who came home after school to clean the plot of weeds. When they finished the designated part they were entitled to a shirt or a coupe or some other item among the clothes and they did it with all seriousness. Well, after a while I was assigned to another place. A few years went by, I can't say how many... and luck forced me to travel to another point where I had to go through Kole. Just passing through, but those kids, now 16-year-olds, at most 18 years old, were grateful and soon found out about my arrival. They still remembered how much fun we had had and they came to greet me, one with a pineapple, one with some bananas... another with another fruit. I wonder: Would the Spanish kids have gestures like these?

I dedicate these paragraphs to those who are afraid of migrants and I assure you that I have been happy with them and not only with the children.

Maria Gloria Xirinachs



Mission experience of the MCJ novices at the «Orphanage of Mother Teresa of Calcuta» in Kinshasa

INTRODUCTION

«As You did it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for me» Mt 25, 40.

We were sent to the centre of Mother Teresa of Calcutta where so many people come, especially many congregations that send their novices there. The aim of this experience for us novices was to help us discover in depth our vocation of service.

I. GENERAL VIEW OF THE CENTRE

- Working hours: 24 hours a day. There are two shifts: one during the day and one at night.
- Tasks: all the household chores...
- Buildings: there are four large rows. I will name them provisionally so that we understand each other. Row A: the Sisters' compound, Row B: the young and the old, Row C: the kitchen and its shed, Row D: the nursery and children under 20 years of age. There is also the shed where the water purification machine is kept, the large chapel, etc.

II. THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WORK

- Block B¹: B1 consists of: 1 Nurse in charge, plus 2 women,
- B2. The same staff as in B1. There are 50 children, including infants and children under 18, but there are also people over 20 who are quite dependent.
- Block D²: D1 and D2 have: 1 Sister in charge and 2 women. There are up to 70 people, of whom about twenty are young women and the rest elderly. The Sister Superior supervised the two houses and the interior spaces, the kitchen, the electricity and water systems, etc. Sister Catherine was in charge of food, medicine, clothing and stitching.

Hello, dear Sisters and Peace to you!

We wanted to share with you our missionary experience.

Indeed, as is customary in our Institute, at the end of the first year of novitiate we have a missionary experience somewhere. This time it was our turn and we did it at the “Orphanage of Mother Teresa of Calcutta” in Kinshasa. This is how we want to respond to Christ’s call to mission, to announce the Good News to the poorest and most abandoned.



Bénédicte Butshiki shares:

“I started my internship on May 20th until June 20th, 2024. At that time we were staying in our provincial house and every day we took the bus to go and share our joys and sorrows with the sick and abandoned children. In this center I met all kinds of people who were neglected by the world. At that time there were 73 women and 50 children. Sisters, it’s a bit sad. There was

a death in my presence and I was not afraid to approach the corpse. The first day I entered the Center I was discouraged and I was afraid seeing the state in which all these people are. What scared me the most was when a woman with Down syndrome pointed directly at me with her finger. I remembered what Sister Elisee had told me: “Where you go, there are many people who are not well-functioning in their minds.” At that moment I felt completely discouraged and I said to myself: Why have I come, Lord? Then a sister from the centre told me: “Sister, when you touch the sick, you must not feel repulsion; think that it is the suffering Christ that you are touching.”

This sentence reminded me of the preparatory retreat we had before our missionary experience and I had the courage to put myself at the service of my brothers and sisters. The first two weeks I was with the adults and I had a good experience with them. I learned to share the sorrows and joys of so many people; the pain of violence suffered by women, abandoned children, despair due to lack of work or loneliness, the pain of the departure of a loved one... I really saw through them the suffering Christ who needs me. Listening to them, I could feel the sadness, and it was as if we were not in the Congo, but in a foreign country. What I sometimes found difficult was understanding

what they were talking about. What I liked and marked most was the concern of the Calcutta Sisters for the poorest, the abandoned and the despised, and the spirit of mutual help, love and forgiveness that existed among them. This helped me to improve my way of helping and loving the poorest.

ACTIVITIES WE CARRIED OUT: We did everything that mothers do in our families. Washing clothes, washing dishes, feeding, making beds, bathing, combing, cutting nails, cleaning the patio and the ditches every day... At the end of the second week, we welcomed Cardinal AMBONGO for the thanksgiving mass for the 25 years of religious life of Sister ALEXIA, a sister from Calcutta. It was the first time I saw him there and I asked him to let me take a photo with him. He agreed. I was very happy to see him. We had organized some surprises to welcome him: different dances with the children, etc.

During the third week, I worked with the babies and the "special" children, and with them I felt the sadness of seeing these abandoned babies looking for affection; especially a little girl who has no face; it is a bit difficult to feed her, but she is beautiful, my sisters!

The fourth and fifth week I went back to the adults. The fifth week was very remarkable for me because there was joy, but also sadness in seeing mothers and children cry when they heard we were returning to our community because our presence was a great joy for the abandoned children, the sisters at the centre and for me. There were some who did not speak, but with our presence they spoke. We said goodbye on June 20th and left work that day at 5 pm to return to the community.

Dear sisters, this is what I experienced during my experience and what I wanted to share with you. I felt very close to you, my sisters, in your missions, where you give yourselves totally to transmitting the love of God the Father to humanity through all your activities. It is on this human journey that the Lord calls us to build his Kingdom of justice, peace and love.



Suzanne Mukiewa tells us:

«Before going to the place of our missionary experience, we had a two-day retreat to prepare our minds and hearts. I was so afraid and anxious... Thanks to this retreat I was able to overcome them. As Jesus is always with me, He consoled me by asking me this question: «Susanne, do you love me?» And I answered Him: «Lord, you know that I love you very much.» Then He said to me: «Help me to help my brothers and sisters who are suffering and lost...» After that, my heart was filled with strength, courage and compassion. As a result, I became convinced that Jesus really needs my ears to listen, my hands to touch, my eyes to see all those people who are suffering, abandoned, lost... With these feelings I went to the Center of Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

When we arrived at the orphanage, they divided us into two groups. I went with the children and teenagers and the other two novices with the adults. There were 50 children and 73 adults.

I was very moved to see the children who had been abandoned by their parents, others because of illnesses or malformations, and above all a girl who was born without a face. It was horrible and frightening to see her for the first time. That day I couldn't look at her. I was very scared and anxious, because she reminded me of the monsters we see in movies. What managed to take these feelings away from me were the words of Jesus that I put at the beginning of this experience. In them I saw the face of Christ and so I was able to control myself and stand before her.

When I saw these children, I thought of their mothers: how could their hearts have changed so much to throw away or abandon their children because of their malformations, or accused of being witches? If they say that the greatest love in the world is the love of a mother, what I saw made me think, where is this heartless humanity going? I have no answer...

This is the work I did with the children: In the morning I cleaned their bedroom, then the dining room, then the terraces and finished by washing the children's clothes. Afterwards, I would feed them and stay with them to

give them some affection, play with them, help them on the swings and be attentive in case they needed something, since most of the children do not know how to speak. This was my first experience at the Center.

Then I went to work with the adults. I worked there for 3 weeks, with 73 women. And there I was also moved to see that most of them were mentally handicapped, and even mentally ill. It was sad and also difficult to control them when they had a crisis. I tried to control them gently, but it was not easy, to the point of getting headaches from my efforts. But despite their condition, they obeyed most of the time.

What I liked most was the respect that the patients had for me. And the way the Sisters of Charity take care of them. The Sisters give themselves body and soul, showing them a lot of affection. They are very sensitive to all kinds of poverty: the sick, the abandoned, the wounded, the rejected... They have a lot of authority over the sick. As soon as they see a Sister, they calm down... I have to say that the nurses were very welcoming to us, and thanks to that we were able to learn to make the most of our experience, explaining to us everything that happens there.

There were also things that made me sad. Like the way the “normal” women mistreated their sick colleagues. Sometimes they would insult them by saying, “You are silly, stupid, useless...” This hurt them inside and affected them so deeply that they would start crying bitterly. And I was also affected by this behavior.

During this time, a woman died. That same day, I was feeding her when she became very sick and immediately fell into a coma. She was taken to the hospital and soon expired. It was very disheartening for me: it was the first time someone almost died in my hands. Her only complaint was that her head hurt for two days.

I witnessed many other things that I keep in my heart.

I had a real missionary experience that taught me a lot about God’s strength. The Lord supported me a lot because, seeing how I worked every day: washing 3 or 4 basins of clothes every day; cleaning the plot, starting with the gutters; the dormitories, the refectory, the washbasins, the showers... All of

that was cleaned with water. Braiding, every day. In all of this, truly everything was grace.

Moreover, working in the Calcutta Centre means having a patient, gentle, tender heart, full of compassion, and not feeling disgust... That is to say:

LOVE THE NEIGHBOUR

Your sister bids you farewell with joy and affection. Peace to all and a happy Mission.

Diem also shares her experience...

«Several months have passed and my heart is still full of experiences, joy and laughter for everything I experienced at the center. And all that from the time my companions and I arrived until the last day and the hustle and bustle of the community. The echoes of the course no longer resonate strongly in me, but have become a catalyst for my life to be more filled with gratitude, a desire to connect more closely with the source of life in my soul: with God and with others.



Once again, I quickly entered my memories, like in a movie, to review the path of my life. I know clearly that during the path of my vocation, there will always be the Master, Jesus, at my side, always calling me, inviting me to love Him with the question “Do you love me?” and He Himself knows it clearly but still wants to hear the answer from my mouth: “Yes, Master, You know everything. You know that I love you.”

I confided to him: “I am worthless, but please let the Strong One walk with me so that the splendor of Christ can shine through me.” I also told him: “I am worthless, but Lord, I am willing to become the hands, eyes, heart, ears, feet... of Christ for others.” I am always grateful for the flavors of life that I have experienced, because thanks to them I am what I am today. I want to LIVE WITH GOD, live with God’s dream, live with God’s desires, look with God’s eyes, help God act, but also think with God and like God.

It is about following God. I believe that the path of following him is the path of living with others, of feeling the things that others bring to their own lives.

I have understood that following God means caring about the life of society, and about the life of those who suffer facing darkness. I really like the teachings of St. Paul to the Romans, and that is also my motto on this journey: "Charity must not be hypocritical... Love one another with brotherly love, consider others more important than yourselves, with enthusiasm, without delay; spread the spirit of zeal to serve the Lord... and pray diligently (Rom 12, 9a, 10-11); I always remember to use it as motivation when I am tired and not to forget to pray, no matter what I am busy with.

That's it...

Every day, sitting on a bus full of people shouting, loud horns... where could I find the spirit to go and serve? It is a prayer that does not cease, no matter where, no matter when, maybe I cannot concentrate or have devotion like in a chapel or a church... but I pray without ceasing. The central door opens, you enter and there it is. A group of people, from the elderly to children, were waiting for us. They shouted with joy, like a child waiting for his mother to come back from the market to bring him a present. They kissed us. Some days, when they saw us from a distance, they ran as fast as they could to get close to us. Then they fell down. The tiredness of my bus ride disappeared with their sincere greetings.

"The eyes are the door to the soul," that is why I would like to say that the tongue is the window to the heart. The door is open to welcome everything with an open heart; so the window is there, and if you open it, you can feel the freshness that the wind brings.

Our founder Maria Camino always emphasized in her letters the role of language when she was on a mission in India. In addition to learning and mastering English, the first sisters also learned local languages to get closer to indigenous peoples such as the Garo, the Khasi, the Naga... So as far as I am concerned, as a passionate evangelizer because of the characteristics of the MCJ, I am no exception.

At the Centre of the Sisters of Charity of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, most people do not know French, not even the nuns, they only speak English and Lingala. They don't even speak Lingala very well. My sisters don't understand

what is being spoken, but I am someone who doesn't know anything. I was very afraid that I would not be able to complete the mission because I did not know the local language. "If God wants, He will do it," says Mother Maria Camino. Yes, He did it with me and with those I work with. In the community, I may not understand what my sisters speak in their language, but here I can understand it. I learned the local language from the women (who knew a little French). They helped me a lot. We communicated mainly through signs and the heart.

Daily work here is not as difficult for me as it was when I was taking care of patients of covid 19, 4 years ago - 8 hours of work - without being able to drink a drop of water - covering my whole body from head to toe - just a huge hole for the eyes. With my two eyes - every day, watching people die, outside of work hours, the noise of the machines and oxygen ringing loudly in my ears even though I was not in the hospital...

The first two days we were still confused and afraid of doing things wrong. On the third day, while I was working, the sister who looked after the adult home came. I started talking to her in English, mostly about work. She told me: "You have to see this house as your home, everything you see, you do it simply, according to your abilities, such as cutting hair, braiding hair, cutting fingernails and toenails, sweeping the floor, bathing sick women and children, feeding the sick, talking to them or confiding in them, folding clothes, sheets or ironing them, etc." I told my sisters that I had asked the sister in charge what we had to do, and she told me that it depended on each one's abilities. So, from the third day onwards, we became familiar with the work.

"The shepherd of the sheep must smell like sheep," said Pope Francis. That seems very true to me. After a day of work, I returned to the community, took a shower, but somewhere there was still a slight "perfume." There were all kinds of smells: the smell of food, the smell of my body when I was kissed, the smell of sewage pipes, the smell of urine, the smell of excrement... most of the people here are paralyzed, disabled, their legs, arms, necks and even their whole bodies are convulsed, limbs are stuck together. So when we take the children to the bathroom, if we leave them alone... you can understand

the catastrophe! This is the explanation of the "perfume" that I carry with me. The Pope is right "the shepherd must smell like sheep". But in all this, I found love and sharing among the patients. I found joy in them. They may be disabled in some limbs, but love is never disabled.

After having had this experience at the Orphanage of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, I learned a lot, especially about the love and service of the Sisters of Charity. They always live Christ's call to "love others as I have loved you." And I cultivated the idea that wherever I am, it is my home; whoever I meet is my family. I also learned optimism, love and joy in serving the sisters and the sick, even though the women and children are very handicapped and even abandoned, and I love them even more. As a result of my service and my life, I feel the presence of God and I love him more and more. I cannot live without his protection and strength. "Thank you Lord for all the lessons you have taught me." And I know: GOD is my most important person. He is within me, working with me and walking with me on the path of life. For all that we do, nothing is ordinary for God. And above all, I am even happier for my vocation to the charism of the Missionaries of Christ Jesus."

IV. CONCLUSION

These, dear Sisters, are some of our experiences during this month of work at the Centre of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. We are tempted to say, like St. John at the end of his Gospel: "If we were to write down everything we have experienced... how many bulletins would that fill?"

We send you our best wishes and all our sisterly affection

Bénédicte Butshiki, Suzanne Mukiewa, Maria Tra Diem

NEWS

VISIT OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT TO THE REGION OF INDIA: From 16th January to 17th March 2025, General Directress, Alphonsine Kitumua and Asia Councillor, Debra Rodricks will undertake the second part of the visit to the Region of India. Having visited China and Vietnam in 2023, they will now visit India.

PERPETUAL VOWS:

Nhan Thi Tran, Huyen Thi Ngo and Xiaoli Zhao, from the India-Vietnam-China region, have been accepted to pronounce their perpetual vows, as they are doing the international course they will do them in Spain at the end of the course.

Departure from the Institute:

On 02 January 2025, she has left the Institute: Florence Obul, from the Region of Africa, may the Lord be with you in this new stage of your life.

FROM OUR FAMILIES: Gone to the Father's house

- ✎ On September 4th, 2024, Mr Lunganu Kabemba Boniface, father of Florence Biama, Region of Africa, passed away.
- ✎ On September 13th, 2024: Tina, sister of Loly Gomez, Delegation of Spain, passed away in Cordoba.

The Lord God will wipe away every tear from every face. He will destroy death forever. Is. 25:9



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