

# MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART

*May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere Loved!*



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## GENERAL BULLETIN

### EASTER



Why keep looking for the dead among those who are alive? I wonder about this today in a world where there is so much death. What does Easter mean to us as MSC today? Where do we look for Jesus?

It seems contradictory, but to look for the Risen One "we must go to the tomb". We must go and be aware of the different situations of "graves" that exist in our world today. "Passover" means to pass from death to life; we are called to accompany the People of God to continue giving "steps" to life. This has to be a dynamic process of awareness and prophetic presence. Easter must make us dynamic human beings, in movement, in action, "in a prophetic way" (Pope Francis).

We must not become accustomed to being spectators of: the people who suffer the horrors of war in Syria and other places, the uprooting that many people in Oceania experience who have to leave their territory because their Islands are sinking; likewise, to the reality of Africa, America and some Asian countries that are devastated by the corruption of political and commercial systems that only take advantage of their natural resources and subject entire countries to misery, disease and lack of opportunities.

Europe and other "developed" countries on other continents today have new intercultural challenges, of tolerance and struggle for a harmonious coexistence amid differences and an "economic well-being" that also generates a lot of inhumanity, loneliness, intolerance, etc.

On the five continents we have to "run" like the women in the gospel to the different tombs, to remove the stones that cover them (Mk 16, 1-8) by starting with the tombs that we live in in community life and in so many other stones that impede the passage of the Risen One within our MSC communities. By going to the tomb we should become aware that, as MSC, we are called to demonstrate in practice: "... I have come that they may have life, life in abundance" (Jn 10,10b). Make the Resurrection happen in the middle of the reality that we live.

An MSC with paschal dynamics is the one who commits himself and risks in the struggle for life. He is the one who knows how to make the "way back" from the "empty sepulcher" to the existential peripheries, which throughout the world continue to cry out for prophetic presences. According to the Gospel, Magdalena and the other women made their way back, with their insecurities and doubts, to announce what they "had seen and heard". They did not return with answers, but with the conviction that they had to walk and announce. We are not the only bearers of this Paschal movement of life: migrants, refugees, catechists, boys and girls, sick people, volunteers, JPIC organizations ... the victims. Peoples and cultures teach us the path of resurrection.

We can live the Passover if we stop looking for the Risen Jesus in comfort, entrenchment, mediocrity and security of a self-referential Religious Life. Let's go out to meet life, but we must go where life cries; there is the Risen One. Let's go, then, to meet him. May these Easter days make us more whole human beings in our Ministry of accompaniment and struggle for life that is increasingly threatened. Let's do it with the joy and happiness that arise uniquely and contradictorily if we are close to those who suffer the most. (CS MSC 12-13)

*P. Mario Abzalón A. Tovar, mSC*



## **STARTING A NEW MISSION IN MOZAMBIQUE**

Everything started several years ago. First it was an elusive dream. Then after many efforts of the previous General Administration, it was agreed to prepare this new MSC Mission under the responsibility of the General Administration, coordinated by the MSC Province of Sao Paulo. After two years of preparation coordinated by the Province of Sao Paulo, finally on March 18, 2018, the beginning of this missionary project became a reality. Fr. Edvaldo Rosa (Provincial) and Fr. Abzalón Alvarado (Fr. General) were present.

Thanks to Fr. Benedito Cortez and Fr. Eduardo Da Silva for their willingness to take on this challenging mission in every way. Again, the MSC assumed one of the most difficult places in the immense Diocese of Pemba, Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique. We are again willing to go where many do not want to go. The two companions have to start from scratch both at the level of apostolate and infrastructure. The mission area is immense with three districts (municipalities): Melucco, Quissanga and Ibo Island, with very high poverty rates, very precarious means of communication, great distances between them and a very high level of Muslim presence. But the seeds of the Kingdom are there in the Heart of the Makua and Maconde people. The MSC will live in Melucco, which is 215 km from the seat of the diocese and a great part of that distance is on dirt roads. Both Bishop Luiz Fernando Lisboa and the religious Sisters from different missionary areas were very welcoming and made our MSC companions feel like a family. A great inter-congregational fraternity is experienced in the mission.

In a future newsletter we will share more details of this new mission. For now, we want to thank, by this means, the Community of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) of Itajubá, Minas Gerais, Brazil (where Benedito Cortez was working) who with much effort managed to raise money to buy a second-hand vehicle for the mission. In addition to this community and the San Miguel Parish in Sao Paulo (where Eduardo Da Silva worked previously), other parish churches also contributed financial help to start buying the most basic tools needed to be able to start living in the mission.

Beforehand we would like to thank some MSC Provinces in Europe that have assumed the commitment to financially maintain this mission.

We hope in the future to have some other MSC from another Province who are willing to go to this new Mission in Melucco.

*P. Mario Abzalón A. Tovar, mSC*

## VISIT TO KOREA

The main objective of the visit to Korea was to make the last preparations for the erection of the new MSC Province of Korea.

The main priority was to visit, dialogue and make contact with each and every one of the members, as well as visiting the different local districts (local MSC communities).

The MSC in Korea live their mission within an ecclesial and social reality very typical of Korea. The MSC confreres are happy and are trying to serve people in different apostolates: chaplaincies, orphanages, street children, retreat houses, care for the laity of the Chevalier Family and benefactors, JPIC, etc.

The young men in the Scholasticate give us much hope for the future of the mis-

sion. We have been adapting our MSC Charism little by little to the millennial culture of Korea. The MSC confreres are very welcoming and are very excited to open themselves up to the MSC Mission. They showed a very receptive attitude and are doing everything possible to prepare well this historic moment of beginning as an MSC Province. We wish that they continue on this path to be signs of the Kingdom of God inside and outside of Korea.

*P. Mario Abzalón A. Tovar, mSC*



## EUROPEAN PROVINCIALS MEETING



day we went to visit the medieval castle “Gravensteen” and in the afternoon we went to the cathedral where the famous painting by the Van Eyck Brothers of the Mystic Lamb is located.

From February 26th till March 3rd Andre was present in Ghendt (BE) at the meeting of the European provincials (PEC). All were present except the Italian provincial who apologized because of health reasons. The meeting was hosted by the Belgian province this year in the old monastery of the Carmelite Fathers in the center of town. This was the first meeting since the General Chapter. Time was spent sharing about the situation in each province, about how each one experiences his ministry in the ageing province and is coping with the care for the elderly confrères, the general lack of personnel, a possible organization of an European assembly, the common novitiate in Ireland, etc. Much attention was given to the future shape and governance of our provinces. It was a well filled agenda. On Fri-

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*P. André Claessens, mSC*

## UAF SUPERIORS MEETING

On March 9th André set off for Cameroun where the conference of UAF Superiors in Yaounde from 11 – 19th took place. The week before the post-novitiate in Nkol-Bisson also hosted the financial committee. The UAF Superior Fr. Toussaint Iluku and his council members, the superiors of the districts of Congo, Cameroon and Senegal took part in this yearly meeting. Here the agenda was still heavier and the climate hotter, so the meeting started early at 8 am. The life of all the entities and the various formation communities was discussed with a very open mind and determination to find the best solutions for the various problems. Decisions also had to be taken about the grassroots experiences at the end of initial formation and a discernment about the admission of the candidates for the priesthood and the place where the 5 new priests to be ordained could render the best service.

We also looked for good candidates for further studies. Also the various needs of infrastructure were discussed.

As usual the needs were larger than the financial possibilities available. Our Union is developing well in Africa.

While we were in Yaounde, Fr. Abzalón was in Mozambique for the start of a new mission there thanks to the help of our confrères from Brazil. May the Lord bless all this work in his Vineyard!

*P. André Claessens, mSC*



## VISIT TO THE LATIN AMERICAN THEOLOGATE



My first visit to a Formation House was the Latin American Theologate in El Salvador. This is a new experience. The Theologate of El Salvador is the House of Formation for the study of Theology in Spanish for all Latin American entities.

This year the House has twenty students of Theology from various entities (the Province of Central America and Mexico, the Province of Curitiba,

the Section of Colombia, the Region of Peru and the Region of Venezuela) led by three formators: Fr. Marvin Sotelo (the Province of Central America and Mexico); Fr. Frank Dautilus (the Dominican Republic Province); and Fr. Zeca (the Province of Curitiba).

It was a joyful and profound visit. Full of life and youth, the confreres of this House of Formation live in a poor neighborhood and like every poor neighborhood in a great city, it is also violent. With this, they bear witness to a loving presence among the poor and suffering of this Latin American country. Our House of Formation in this place is a true testimony of the sign of God among the most deprived human beings.

During the days I stayed there it was possible to talk to each of the students and share a little of the life, joy and difficulties that they face. It was possible to perceive in each of them their identification with our charism and Spirituality. It was a true meeting of brothers.

*P. Humberto Henriques, mSC*

## **ENCOUNTER OF THE ANDEAN UNION**

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart present in Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela and Colombia have been reflecting for some time and talking about the possibility of creating an Andean Union. While the path to achieving this is long, steps have already started to be taken. In February we had another in a series of meetings with the confreres of these countries. The meeting was held in Bogotá, Colombia, and twenty MSC were present (eight from Colombia, four from Peru, four from Ecuador, two from Venezuela, the CA-MSC Coordinator, Fr. Valentim Meneses and myself, as a member of the General Council ).

The purpose of this meeting was to listen to a concrete experience of another Congregation that went through this process of Restructuring and to evaluate our real possibilities. In addition, we reflected on the Latin American and Colombian reality, based on the advice of a sociology expert.

Our meeting lasted four days and during those days it was possible to feel the interest and the commitment of each one of the entities involved in this process. There are many questions, concerns, and suggestions, but the important thing is that everyone is moving towards a possible restructuring of this Union-for the good of the mission.

At the end of the meeting, a concrete proposal was presented to follow up on, at the level of Ongoing Formation, with the confreres in the first five years of ministry. With this it was decided to give priority, in this first moment, to the unity of the confreres who are at this stage of their missionary life and thus to further foster unity among these entities. In addition to accompaniment in their own places of mission, it was decided that once a year these confreres will meet to share life and mission.

For the next meeting to be held in February 2020 in Ecuador, it was established that we would re-

fect on the possibility of a unified formation house for the Pre-Novitiate and the concrete possibilities of exchanging MSCs between these countries.



*P. Humberto Henriques, mSC*

## VISITS TO THE PHILIPPINES AND PNG

Our confreres at Chevalier Home and the Provincial House in Manila provided a generous welcome when I visited the Philippines in late February. After an informative morning with the Provincial, Bogey Cabrera and Ad van Hest, I went to CFA, the Communications Foundation for Asia, where Fil Pelignon and staff presented their current works in communications and media. CFA is an excellent resource with an energetic and talented group of collaborators. Later I visited the Scholasticate and Collegiate community with Bogey and our trusty driver Deacon RonRon Lobo. After the celebration of Mass there was a dinner followed by a dialogue with the Scholastics. Thanks to formators Edwin Borlasa and Rene Mercader, and our formandi.

On the second day we visited our postulants and their formator Ramil Rolito. With Edwin Borlasa we went to Libis to the Center for the Poor, where many people have settled and live in poor circumstances. We went to the Mission Station of OLSH and met with Richard Montaner and the enthusiastic pastoral team in that area of Sta Quiteria Parish, where we then went to have lunch with the parish priests George Alfonso, Charles Patricio and others. That afternoon we visited Chevalier School in Angeles City where we met with Archie Tapang the Rector and Jojie Balinton, as well as the staff community. The spirit and commitment of these “Caballeros” is admirable. We stayed overnight and enjoyed an evening’s entertainment.

Next morning, we visited the Novitiate before heading on to meet the OLSH and MSC Sisters. Following this I had three excellent days with the Cor Vitae team, Sam Maranresy, Cathie Mwagioidi fdnsc and Sophy Francis msc and had a chance to discuss with Sam the coming APIA formators gathering in Sydney in September.

Towards the end of my stay in Manila I joined in with the District conveniat for an evening together, where I had a chance to catch up with a number of confreres such as Ben Alforque.

From Manila I went on to three days in Port Moresby, PNG, where I met with the Provincial, John Willio, his deputy Urban Kalimet and the members of the Provincial House community at Two Mile. I visited Gerahu parish and saw the Manuel Serra House, a project undertaken by Ben Flemming. On a visit to De Boismenu College I had lunch and a conversation with our fourteen Scholastics and formators Greg Ruamana and Bart Marang. I had a very pleasant evening with the MSC from the Moresby District for a meal and gathering. Cardinal John Ribat was among those present. Sincere thanks to our confreres in the Philippines and Papua New Guinea.

*P. Chris Chaplin, mSC*



## MENTORING AND FACILITATING INDIGENOUS TIWI WOMEN INTO POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP: MY EXPERIENCE OF THE PROCESS IN A CROSS-CULTURAL CONTEXT.


*This is an extract of a talk given by Sr. Anne Gardiner fdnsc called “Mentoring and Facilitating indigenous Tiwi women into positions of leadership: my experience of the process in a cross-cultural context”. Sr. Anne is a Daughter of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart working with the Tiwi people of Northern Australia for over fifty years. Sr. Anne received the 2017 Senior Australian of the Year of Award and gave this talk in Rome on the occasion of International Women’s Day, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018, at the invitation of the Australian Embassies to the Vatican and Italy. We are grateful to Sr. Anne for allowing us to reprint this extract.*

The Tiwi Islands are home to around 2,500 people who speak their own unique language, Tiwi, and practice a culture that is not used anywhere else in Australia. Tiwi people's world views, beliefs, and daily reality of their lives are as far from my English-speaking Australian culture and the Catholic religious culture, as is possible. Yet many Tiwi have achieved a level of Biculturalism where both cultures sit comfortably in their daily lives. In the Tiwi culture, it is traditionally men who lead, who own land and who have ‘political’ power in family issues. The women of course have the most influential role in rearing the next generation.

When Bishop Gsell MSC arrived on Bathurst Island in 1911, the Tiwi people understood the world through their hunter-gatherer way of life. Their knowledge system was broad and deep and very closely linked to the land, kinship and a spiritual life symbiotic with the world around them. Some important aspects of those ways of living and believing have been preserved to this day, along with the new knowledge and skills of 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia. The latter involves relating to people in very different ways to traditional Tiwi ways, thus my role as mentor and facilitator was to lead the women to a bicultural position, one where they added new ways of working and seeing the world. It is not our role, as temporary residents in Tiwi country to replace Tiwi people's knowledge and culture. We can teach them how to understand how we work and how we relate to others. These ways are foreign to the Tiwi people but we can walk beside them as we and they become bicultural.

You will note that I haven’t used the word “empowerment” as it is not within our ability to empower those who already possess the knowledge and skills of leadership and power. Just because we don't always recognise leadership in others’ cultures, doesn't mean it is not there. Let us ask ourselves, how do we see leadership in our own cultures? Who do we expect should be leaders in our cultures? Our ideas of leadership are determined by (OR limited by) our social and cultural experiences of leadership.

“Parlingarri” is the Tiwi word for ‘Long Time Ago’. We understand that governance belonged to the male seniors of the Skin groups. As western ways have infiltrated their society, much of the authority belonging to the elders of the group sadly, has been lost. Our standard western view of leadership is the hierarchical structure, where a number of people may have leadership positions involving power, but the ultimate powerful position in my culture is held by one person ‘at the top’. My first experience of needing to mentor was as the Principal of St Therese's school (now Murrupurtiyanuwu Catholic School) at Wurrumiyanga on Bathurst Island. I HAD a leadership team, but I was not a MEMBER of a leadership team. It took many years of working in the school with Tiwi people for me to realise that it wasn't my job to make them into another version of ‘Sr Anne’. The indigenous Australian way of solving problems, of making decisions, belongs to the group and groups must be arranged along kinship lines. Thus, their structure can be said to be one of shared leadership. Shared leadership that is representative of their cultural structures, the skin groups, is what they work with, what they relate to, and what they succeed with. Their complex kinship system determines who and how decisions are made and anyone in the wrong kinship relationship cannot make decisions that affect those outside of their right kinship group. This makes leadership a challenge, especially for women learning to operate in a western cultural context within their own communities.



I needed to look to a future that involved Tiwi leadership of the school. I initially thought that this meant handing over the keys when I was ready. However, the Tiwi teacher whom I thought would take on the position came to me and said "Anne, I can't be a tall poppy like you". It was then I realised how little I understood of their cultural life. I wanted to know 'why' she couldn't! I didn't know what I didn't know. More importantly, I didn't know what the Tiwi didn't know! It was more obvious that I didn't know what they did know either! I had been in that community for over 30 years at the time.


So how does one enter discourse with the Tiwi women regarding leadership? First and foremost, we must be prepared to listen to what they are really telling us. They will tell us their fears, the pressures they carry in belonging to a family with strict rules regarding who they can and can't talk to and in what ways, one consequence being that they cannot refuse a request from people in particular relationships to them. To step outside of the group is very scary and requires a high degree of risk-taking. What are these fears? They would say, "Shame" (I'll feel ashamed), "Others will talk about me", "I might make a mistake", "What if I fail", "I can't tell my mother/brother/uncle/grandmother what to do, so how can I do this job?" The last fear is linked to the kinship structure where a same-aged peer, or even a child, may be recognised as 'brother' or 'mother or grandmother'. The kinship system for example, does not allow a sister to talk, let alone to tell, a 'brother' or 'father' what to do.

A small example is a mother's sister's children are regarded as siblings (not first cousins), as are a father's brother's children. As a result, to keep the kinship system strong, a daughter of one mother cannot be seen to be friendly with the son of the mother's sister, or the son of a father's brother. She calls him brother and cannot tell him what to do, nor in fact can she associate with him. How would this work if a Tiwi woman was the Principal of the school and one of the Tiwi male teachers (in a wrong-way relationship with the Principal) needed a 'wise word'? How would her role as Principal, or even Senior Teacher work, if she had no influence over many of the children due to her relationship to them? There are deep and solid foundations in Tiwi culture: Family relationships come first, as determined through a complex kinship system. Country, that is, family and clan owned land has a strong link to identity. Ceremonies mark major life events and developments, involving skin groups and dance. These are the means for handing down the cultural knowledge and skills to the younger members of the culture. If these were to go, then the young people would lose strength in their identity. Unfortunately, this has happened in some families with tragic outcomes such as youth suicide. Hindrances to individual female leadership include issues of alcoholism and gambling that weaken the previous strength of family authority.

Alternatively, where group leadership reflecting cultural structure is created, one person in the group can speak to those with whom the others cannot. The group leadership that evolved in the school was known as the Milimika, a group of four women. Each woman had responsibility for a certain aspect of running the school and together, the four made one.

After my experience of mentoring at the school, I have since been involved in working cross-culturally to mentor and facilitate Tiwi women into other leadership positions in the museum at Wurrumiyanga. This project started as a small tribute to the missionaries who worked at Wurrumiyanga since 1911. It soon grew to exhibit important features and developments, both past and current in Tiwi lives, their culture, language and their achievements in both cultures. There came the time when I needed to handover the Patakijali Museum. When I came to this second mentoring / facilitating experience with the Tiwi women, I proceeded in a totally different way. I remembered to go a bit slower. I remembered I needed to make time to listen. I had to remind myself that the women don't think at the rate I think in English, they do that in Tiwi. They are being asked to engage with the new cultural knowledge and skills in a language that is not theirs. Their world view does not





feature temporal deadlines; their understanding of time is sourced from nature and the seasonal changes along with moon and sun cycles. We have artificially chopped our days up into bits and given the bits numerical names. They needed time in their own time to think about what I was asking them to consider. I didn't want to impose on either of them, something that put too much pressure on them culturally, physically or mentally such that they would regret what they had taken on. When beginning to discuss the idea of me working with them to eventually manage the museum themselves, I had to be patient and wait for three days for reflection and thinking (I call this the silent time) before any response. They were the first to speak, they said “we need to talk”. They said, “We can't do it”. That morning I had read a quote “true courage is when you are really afraid to do something but you go ahead and do it” I explained what that meant in my life and we went into two more days of silence. Because I had learnt how to listen, I'd learned how to communicate. It may have been silent but communication was happening.

They came to me again and said, "We want to give it a go". Each one carried the quote of courage - they'd written it out. They gathered their strength and were very courageous and willing to give it a go - they have succeeded. They did it their way. They'd seen me do it my way, they did it their way, using skills they already possessed. The museum hosts numbers of tourists daily. These women had to learn how to interact with English speaking ‘strangers’ in a western non-detached way as they hosted visitors in the museum. They also had to take responsibility for managing the money, the upkeep of the exhibitions, the computer programs. This might not sound like much but when you know the cultural context in which these women live, they do not engage in any activity like this in their home culture. They learned new skills and knowledge and I learned new skills and knowledge. It's a two-way thing, a bridge where we come from our own side and meet in the middle, cross the bridge to visit other cultures and return to the safety of ours when we want/can. They use both Tiwi and English in their interactions with the tourists and local people. They are competent bilingual and bicultural leaders.

As it turned out, attempting to adapt to our ways has left a path of despair and hopelessness in many cases. Wurrumiyanga suffers the socially negative issues of addiction to alcohol and drugs, youth suicide, and violence. These women are very brave to take on leadership roles that are so far outside their culture. We have to be able to learn to listen and be ready to communicate. We need to realise that we don't know what we think we know; that other people's knowledge and skills are as legitimate and effective as ours. There is not only one way in this world. This is a challenge for people from either culture. I applaud those Tiwi women who did it.

*Sr. Anne Gardiner fdnsc*



**Tony Arthur with Her Excellency Melissa Hitchman the Australian Ambassador to the Holy See.**



## Tony Arthur

Tony Arthur msc returned to Kensington, Australia on March 22nd. We wish to express our immense gratitude to Tony for his many years of collaboration in the General Administration, the most recent being the last three years in the General Secretariat. We thank him for his dedication, humour and welcome insight.



## Ignatian Exercises

Fr. Dominic Gleeson MSC with Novices of the Indian Union, after giving the 30 day Ignatian Exercises to them in Kerala during March.

You, a member of the Chevalier Family, can also send your news to this section of our Newsletter.  
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