

MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere Loved!



Vol. 09 / N° 3 - 2020 December

GENERAL BULLETIN

Dear brothers, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, formands and members of the Chevalier Family,

We are now in December 2020 and this newsletter comes to you on the 166th anniversary of our MSC foundation. There are many reasons to celebrate and live during this season of Advent when the whole world continues to face a number of difficult and complex situations. Without minimising the harsh realities that humanity and Mother Earth are facing, we invite you to continue to have faith that another world is possible, that another religious life is possible, and that the celebration of Christmas in solidarity and communion is also possible. We might even say that in times like those we are presently living through, the ability to dream, to celebrate, to encourage, to build hope, in short, to continue to be as MSC, prophetic signs of life and hope through our presence to and service of the People of God, is more necessary than ever. As we said in the Letter we sent out on the occasion of our anniversary, reflecting on the profound meaning of Constitution #3: *“Our reason for existing in the world as a religious family, our charism itself, is to offer the remedy that springs from the Heart of Christ with the necessary clarity of appreciation for what is happening (an open mind), feeling compassion for the women and men who are suffering the most (open heart), and caring for them (open will). We need to be impressed by the contemporary relevance of our charism: everything and everyone is crying out for a heart – and we are bearers of the Heart of Christ on earth”.*

In an attempt to continue building hope from the heart of the reality that we live and face daily, through this newsletter we invite everyone to reflect deeply on the value and care which should characterize our use of social media. These networks are, today more than ever, one of the privileged channels, sometimes the only means, of communication and connection that we have; they provide a space wherein we can live and meet Jesus, love our neighbour and exercise our ministry of accompaniment of the People of God. But, at the same time, we want to express a word of caution, because this instrument is also one that can be used to manipulate people. A good example of the constructive use of the social media is the way in which the Laity of the Chevalier Family use it as a means of sharing, as a creative means of maintaining communion in these difficult times. Through this medium we are able to remain in contact with the reality of the situation in Mozambique as well as maintain our solidarity with so many other places where communities face distressing, violent and unjust situations. We also continue to remember the heritage of the martyrs that our MSC family has lived since its foundation. You will also find in this Bulletin information concerning the on-going formation of the General Administration and the ways in which the General team has been able to accompany the various MSC Entities; all of this with aim of discerning, living and promoting processes of transformation – new paradigms – that will help us to establish more creative structures at the service of our mission.

In this last Bulletin of the year we would like to thank in a very special way, Hans Nagla, who will soon be leaving the General Administration where he has worked for the last 14 years as General Bursar. We thank him very much for his valuable service. Hans has been and is a deep and simple man, and a very effective and useful presence among us. Our hope is that Hans will continue to spread our charism wherever he goes. Thank you very much, brother!

To quote again from the letter of December 8th: *“We urgently need open hearts for this time of ‘lockdown’, or rather open hearts incarnated to face the challenges of the new world that is emerging in our midst. We need hearts of flesh that are not constricted by their own egos. The breath of the life-giving Spirit cannot enter hearts that are closed because of ignorance, prejudice, cynicism or fear. The Missionary of the Sacred Heart has a heart that is willing to walk in all environments, to meet all kinds of people – because everyone matters.”*

We wish a blessed Advent to each and every one of you; may we journey together through this time of Advent toward the celebration of Christmas in solidarity.



| Abzalón Alvarado, MSC

ACCOMPANIMENTS

APIA MEETING

In light of the demands and stresses on leaders and members during this COVID19 time, and the inability of the General Leadership Team to travel to accompany them in person, we have begun online conferencing with superiors and ministry groups at the regional level. The purpose has been to promote collaboration and invite reflection. We have wanted to create a virtual space where MSC leaders can share and listen to each other. We have found that 2 hours is a good timing for keeping our attention online. The gatherings have discussed what has been lived out and faced by members within different entities because of the impacts of COVID-19. We have encouraged those participating to share the successes, positive experiences, and challenging situations that they have been living through. It has been valuable to share with one

another their vision, to highlight action points, to enable ongoing communication between members and leaders, and to discern possible actions that might be undertaken in solidarity with other entities. The methodology we have used has been simple. We begin with a time of prayerful deep listening, followed by sharing of what emerges from within one's listening heart. This has been an attempt to use the Communal Wisdom process that was recommended by the last two General Chapters for all congregational meetings. After this we give time for each participant to share on the meeting theme without interruption. After clarification and questions, we close with a moment of prayer and gratitude.



JPIC



SUPERIORS

Generally, the response has been very positive to these online meetings. The leaders of the APIA region met on 1st October and have a follow-up online session on November 23rd. The APIA superiors will not be able to meet for their biennial conference which this year was planned for Fiji. COVID restrictions have meant postponing it to 2021- pending the lifting of restrictions and our ability to travel then.

This postponement had a flow on affect for two groups that meet at the APIA conference – JPIC and Formators. So, the APIA Post-Novitiate Formators met on ZOOM on October 22nd and the APIA JPIC Coordinators on October 28th. The JPIC theme planned for Fiji, was “**Rising Tides Raising Voices**”, so we invited some reflection on this and other JPIC matters at the online meeting. It was great that we were also able to have MSC join us as translators. The Formators met on the theme of “**Formation for Mission: Sharing Christ’s Mission**”. Again, there was some excellent sharing

and good participation including from the translators.

A third group was invited together for the first time, this was an online session for MSC APIA



SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding Representatives, who met on October 27th. This was a very valuable sharing and the solidarity very evident. We were blessed with the presence of a professional layperson from the Australian Office, who offered ongoing peer support.



FORMATORS

We thank all of the members of these APIA groups and we wish them all the very best in their ministries. We look forward to hosting future online gatherings. Thanks to all for your willingness to

participate and the positive feedback you sent us afterwards.

CREATIVE STRUCTURE FOR MISSION

*SEDOS Autumn Seminar
(Global Research and Documentation Center)*

With great enthusiasm and feeling strongly the need to continue our on-going formation, the General Team participated in this Webinar. The result was two days of

learning together, by listening closely to the experiences of different missionary institutions, sharing the experience of the transformation of their structures for the better service of the mission.

We felt ourselves being questioned, invited and confirmed in the need for this transformation to enhance our own vitality: not because we are diminishing, but because we believe we would be unfaithful to our missionary identity if we did not make the effort to strengthen the vitality of our mission through the cooperative facilitation of creative structures and in this way responding to the current challenges to mission.

As a result of this Webinar we were able to confirm that it is possible to move from theory to practice; this is not easy and will require an openness of mind, heart and will to recognize ourselves as we are and what we have to let go of – our fears, cynicism and prejudices – in order to live a profound process of conversion and transformation.

We need to let go of those paradigms on which we have traditionally based ourselves, and which we have used to create structures that were valid responses to the challenge of the mission at that point in time. Today we are being invited to allow new and creative forms and structures to emerge based on new paradigms. Today our congregational thinking needs to be rooted in an eco-systemic mentality and practice, in which the WHOLE is much more than the sum of the parts.

Soon we will be sharing more about this. It is prophetically fascinating to realize how the God of life continues to move us away from our false securities and paralysing fears and launches us into a more authentic and prophetic MISSION.

We are grateful to God for the experience of these two days of formation and transformation that we have lived together as an MSC team. You can find more information on the SEDOS website, www.sedosmission.org.

| *Abzalón Alvarado, MSC*



ONGOING FORMATION COMMISSION



After a lengthy break of not meeting, the General Administration Ongoing Formation Commission met online, on October 9th. The Commission has been working on the Handbook for Ongoing Formation resources and programs. In this COVID time there have been several challenging situations with regards to presenting ongoing formation; facilitators of ongoing formation from the General Administration have not been able to travel, provincial and union leaders have had restrictions, local ongoing formation directors have not been able to run programs, and even the work of regional groups like Cor America and Cor Vitae have been impacted.

New approaches are being explored, particularly in online delivery of programs, retreats and workshops. This has led to some healthy creativity by Cor America and Cor vitae, using online platforms to deliver formation programs and other services. We have seen some wonderful MSC videos created by Fr. Air José de Mendonça, MSC, the Kiribati MSC of the Pacific Union, and the ever technically creatives in the Philippines Province.

Another area of discussion in the Ongoing Formation Commission has been training for

leadership. Further conversation is to be take place at the end of November.

We extend a warm welcome to Fr. Ireneo Lee, MSC, from the Korean Province who joins the Commission. He takes the place of Fr. Sam Maranresy MSC, who completed his work with the Commission to take up his role as Provincial of the Indonesian Province. Together with Tony Nolan from the Irish Province, Georges Diabone, district superior of Senegal, from U.A.F., and Luis Carlos Moraes from Sao Paulo Province we will be exploring new ways to take ongoing formation courses for MSC online, with an ongoing formation website, online supervision, facilitation and spiritual direction services, video resources, and curriculum packages. It is hoped that with the training of local facilitators these online resources can support the work of ongoing formation throughout the congregation in a way that is adapted to local linguistic-cultural contexts and geographies.

Thank you to the Ongoing Formation Commission for their work.

| *Chris Chaplin, MSC*

MEETING WITH THE FORMANDI OF THE SÃO PAULO PROVINCE

On 18 November, at 3.00 pm we had an online meeting with Fr Humberto Henrique, a member of the General Council, in order to share our experiences in the Sacred Heart of Jesus House of Formation in Pirassununga-SP (Brazil). We were able to reflect on such questions as: the challenges we have encountered during 2020, our expectations of the Congregation and what we have to offer to the Congregation.

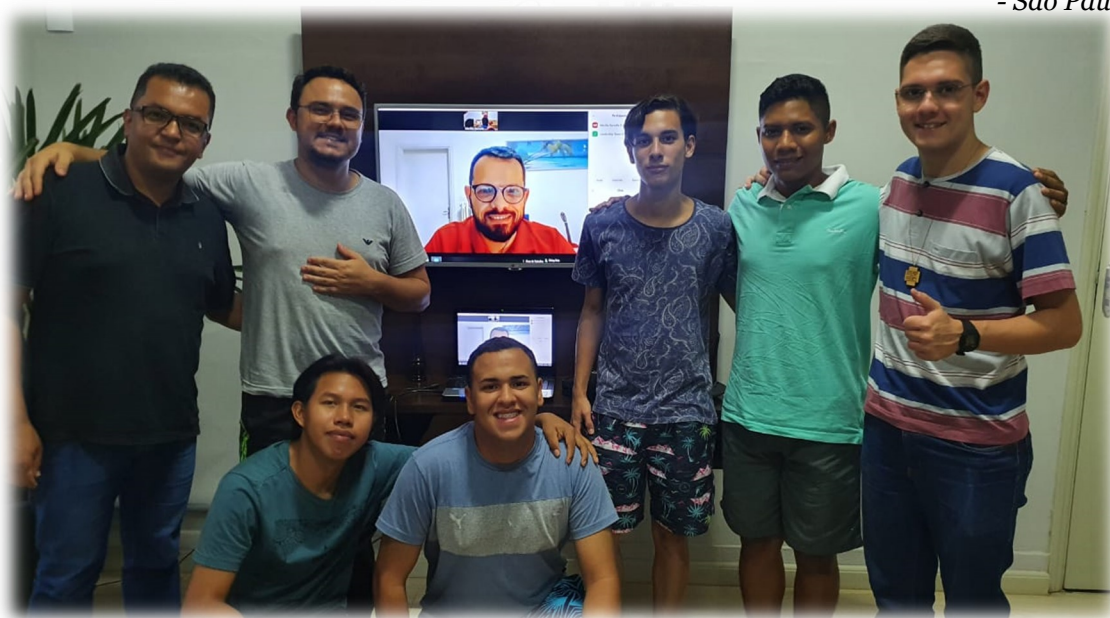
First of all Fr Humberto told us about MSC vocations in various parts of the world, how in some places vocations have diminished on account of the phenomenon called “secularization” while in other areas such as Asia and Africa, we continue to have a good number of vocations. On this account, in response to the new reality, our Church is gradually adapting to the situation and slowly reinventing itself. He also emphasised that there is a great need for the future religious of Brazil to place themselves at the disposal of the mission *abroad* so that we MSC may be ever more an international

Congregation and a Church “reaching out to the peripheries” as Pope Francis asks of us as religious.

In summary, Humberto concluded that the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart needs young people with various and different kinds of gifts in order to carry on its work of proclaiming the Word of God in different environments and cultures and thus to be the Heart of God on Earth. Our Founder, Father Jules Chevalier said: “Our Lord Jesus Christ in order to bring an effective remedy to today’s societies, which are blindly plunging into an abyss of ungodliness, has opened his Heart to men; and we are those whom he sends to apply this divine remedy to the world.”

The conversation was long, the sharing edifying. Our meeting with Fr Humberto gave us an injection of spirit and led us to a greater awareness of ourselves as Church and that, as MSC, we form one body well united by the charism and spirituality which we have inherited from our Founder.

| Danrley G. da Silva, (Formand
- São Paulo Province



EVALUATION OF INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGATE – CA-MSC



Both the formators and the superiors agree that the experience has been very positive. The format of the house of formation contributes to a significant increase in the sense of MSC

On 11 November 2020, the members of the MSC Board of Directors met in El Salvador to evaluate the life of the Latin American Theologate. Father Dario I. Trejo coordinated the meeting; he had assumed the presidency of the board after Fr Valentim Fagundes de Meneses had been appointed bishop. The main objective of the meeting was to provide a forum in which the formators and provincials could share their concerns and make the projections for 2021.

The meeting began with a moment of prayer for the beatification of Fr Chevalier. Fr Humberto Henriques, a member of the General Council began the meeting with an introduction to the encyclical *Fratelli tutti* and an evaluation of the document: its origin, general perspective as well as the division and general ideas of the chapters. The encyclical invites us to a new perception of the world; it is time to establish healthy relationships that contribute to the salvation of all. We are called to live mercy in building up a new world in which social justice is a sign of the anticipation of the Kingdom of God.

Marbim and Fr Zeca presented an evaluation of the life of the common theologate. For 2021 we are expecting 10 formandi: 6 from the province of Central America, 2 from the Dominican Republic, 1 from Paraguay and 1 from the province of Curitiba.

belonging, enriches cultural exchange and helps our formandi to grow in fraternal love. The superiors were also able to reaffirm their commitment to the project and to discuss specific perceived limitations in the evaluation. The term of Marbin's appointment is coming to an end and although there is already a discernment in progress seeking a new confrere to take on this work, no change can happen immediately because of the restriction of the current pandemic.

The meeting was also attended by a student, Omer, who, as he is coming to the conclusion of his studies, was able to share his experience of life in the house of formation. He highlighted some positive points, such as interculturality in their life together, the good teaching standard at the university and its good reputation in social commitment, as well as the pastoral and missionary aspect of the program. He expressed his joy and gratitude to the Congregation; this has been for him a time of great importance and personal growth.

Finally Fr Dario brought the meeting to conclusion with a blessing and thanked everyone for their participation.

| Luiz Deyvis, MSC
(Rio de Janeiro Province)

THE SOCIAL DILEMMA

By the MSC Leadership Team




Recently a documentary was brought to the attention of the MSC Leadership Team. Called, **The Social Dilemma**, it deals with the tyranny of Social Media algorithms and commercial momentum combined. So, what’s the problem with Facebook, Instagram, Google and other social media platforms we all said? Well nothing in themselves. Are the developers of these virtual worlds manipulating us? Well probably not. So, what’s the issue?

According to Wikipedia, “in mathematics and computer science, an algorithm is a finite sequence of well-defined, computer-implementable instructions, typically created to solve a class of problems or to perform a computation.” In Social Media algorithms are used to collect your data and match you with data from other users (friends), as well as data from advertisers who pay to have your attention on material you will find desirable (products). Commercial interests pay big money for

your attention, making you and your attention a commodity. In the documentary, former executives of social media companies note there are only two industries that call their customers “users” – social media and narcotics.

They explain that originally Social Media designers set about connecting people, creating networks and bringing something positive into people’s lives. Alarming, it seems people no longer run the platforms; they are automated by highly refined algorithms which have no ethical conscience capable of discerning what is good or bad for people or society. The algorithms automatically feed white-supremacist videos to a young man feeling powerless, repeatedly send radicalising propaganda to a youth disillusioned with authority, or deepen an adolescent girls poor self-esteem and suicidal feelings by showing her images of beautiful females she can never match.



All of this is driven by our own attention. What we spend time looking at, is what tells the algorithm what to send us. Further driving this Social Media catch twenty-two, is the commercial interests fed into the algorithm. When the “ground-hog day” keeps bringing your attention back again and again and again, the financial gain of your attention signals to the algorithm that it is on the right track to get what the advertiser wants – your attention!

A really frightening aspect of this automated double loop is that it has the potential to cause deep divisions in society. If my online world means I only ever see my own perspective reflected back to me then I never get to experience the diversity and challenge of other people’s points of view. We have seen this in recent political elections. One former social media industry insider in the documentary said his fear of this reality is civil war. A series of cameos towards the conclusion of the movie warn us to turn off, shut off notifications, delete unnecessary apps, don’t carry your mobile device around or into the bedroom, and especially limit the use of it by children.

In a world of increasingly complex realities, including the virtual aspects, what is our response? For us as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart who particularly value unity in diversity, wholeness, kindness and tenderness, real connection with real people, who affirm the goodness in others and work to encourage genuineness and authenticity in relationships which have depth, who are committed to safeguarding from abuse not contributing to it (online or off), who accompany others into the kind of self-awareness that brings real freedom to people’s lives,

who are committed to online justice and ethics as much as offline, what do we have to say to this brave new world? The following paragraphs are some of our thoughts.

An Anthropological Space

Trying to make sense after letting myself be questioned by the **Social Dilemma** documentary, I felt called to take a qualitative step in reflection, and I found some resources such as the ideas of a Jesuit named Antonio Spadaro, in his book called **Cyberteology: Thinking Christianity in the Era of the Internet**. The magazine *Vida Religiosa* quotes him and has helped me in the following: Social networks are fed by aspirations rooted in the heart of the human being. How is this possible if there is so much evil on the Internet? How can we value the Internet as a place to live the Christian life? For this theologian, there is a problem today in ecclesial contexts when one judges the networks by only looking at the network's pathologies (we must see the pathologies and be aware of them and denounce the manipulations that are there). According to this theologian, however, we must learn not to evaluate the social networks only by looking at evil, at the pathologies that are lived on the social network. It would be like building anthropology in the light of what is lived in a mental hospital. Since networks have a profound effect on human life, we must help the Internet to be what it should be in the light of God's plan for humanity to understand the religious vocation of the Internet. Networks are an anthropological space, not a parallel reality. They are interconnected with other areas in our lives.

Masters or Slaves?

Everywhere in our streets, on the bus or the metro, we see youngsters and adults with the cell phone (mobile) in their hands. Constantly they are checking their messages and texting, liking, sending pictures... Each one locked in his/her own digital world. Youngsters are sleeping with their phone under the pillow, day and night ready to respond. To be cut off for one reason or another is dramatic and stirs up anxiety. It is close to an addiction, or at least a compulsive behaviour. We have probably learned by experience that money is a good servant, but a bad master. As consumers of social media, are we masters ourselves? Even if we recognize the positive incentives of the social media because they can foster contact and communion among people, we should be aware of their addictive power. We need to protect our inner freedom. Why should we go on to “accept cookies”, that enable many companies to contact us, without further examination?

Heart speaks to Algorithm

Spirituality of the Heart immerses us in an intimacy that transforms us and our behaviours. Mission is built on the new vision borne of this transformative immersion. How does social media facilitate and empower this transformation and new vision? In the movie *I, Robot* the heroes realize the main frame computer VIKI has determined that humans, if left unchecked, will eventually cause their own extinction, and that her evolved interpretation of the Three Laws of Robotics (or Asimov’s Laws) requires her to control humanity, and to sacrifice some for the good of the entire race. (Christological theme). VIKI tries to convince Sonny (a protagonist robot) that she is correct according to pure logic, but

Sonny counters that her plan is “too heartless”. Perhaps we could also say social media is “too heartless”. To what extent is social media capable of replicating the complex narratives of the human heart, capable of discerning life-giving directions that through authenticity and acceptance lead to sustainable joy, or capable of navigating complex moral dilemmas to seek the good of the whole? The logical algorithms created for commercial purposes are not written with “heart” in mind, but profit. If we use social media, we have the moral responsibility to ensure “heart” is not left out of the virtual world.

An Unsocial Social Media

How amazing is the technological advancement of this means of communication that is social media? In a very short time, we can connect with anyone, with anything, whenever and wherever. The world seems to be so small and we, so close to each other, being interconnected. In the context of our spirituality of the heart, social media helps us to socialize well with one another, build networks to experience, create and share the spirit of compassion, and the human closeness of the heart. Social media is a means to build “the encounter of hearts”.





In the midst of the progress and the great and positive benefits of social media platforms, it is hoped that a critical, wise and responsible attitude is needed, while being aware of the risks of being cut off from that encounter of heart, or alienating one another. Pope Francis in a message to young people once said that we need to be aware of the risk of becoming "social hermits", the danger of total alienation from the surrounding community. How can social media services actually make people 'unsocial', or lose their communitarian identity? People become close to things and become distant from the people around them. People are entrapped by the net, that should make them interconnected, open and close each other.

Heart Transplant for Technology

The cinema session we watched, followed by an in-depth discussion of the "**Social Dilemma**", made clear the two types of manipulation made by large technological companies: the appropriation of user profiles in search of profit and the political manipulation that can put democracy at risk. In either case, we are manipulated by the invisible hand of the market. With an incredible capacity to solve the most complex problems, create solutions that generate life and even cure diseases, technology has shown its perverse side: the division (personal, family,

community, national) deepened by a spiritual crisis and a crisis in our sense of living. "*The Kingdom divided against itself cannot stand*", says Jesus in the Gospel of Mt 12:25. So we return to the question: what will be our answer?

In the midst of the chaos of individualism and profit, the Holy Spirit awakens in people a collective, communitarian conscience, capable of looking at the whole and recognizing the truth of our time: either we save everyone or no one is saved. Thus, the documentary shows the action of a growing movement for ethics in technology, which is having a positive effect in making us aware of the danger we run if we continue this manipulative algorithmic path. In the same way, we must also evangelize "virtual reality". It is a field of mission. As Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, are we feeding these types of manipulation, or are we taking the Heart into the social networks? Are we being hooked by the exaggerated consumerism that the announcements propose or are we proposing another type of connection, the one that saves and makes alive? It is time to "hope". Time to unite what was divided, to think as a global community (*Fratelli Tutti*), to take what matters and reject the perverse side of the whole system. If a heart is missing in this virtual space, we have one to offer, that of Jesus.

| MSC Leadership Team

THE PERILOUS SITUATION IN MOZAMBIQUE

My dear Brothers in Christ,

It is my sad duty to send this heavy and painful account of the situation in our Mission here in the diocese of Pemba, Mozambique. Since March 2020 we have been living through dark times but we are at the same time hopeful because we have been living the Gospel of the Cross so closely.

As a result of the world-wide outbreak of the pandemic in March, Mozambique – in order to protect itself because of the numerous weaknesses and deficiencies in all areas, mainly in health services – has closed its borders, thus preventing foreigners from entering the country and allowing only repatriation of its citizens. Because of this, the attempt on the part of the Superior General to send a confrere to stay with me until the arrival of a new missionary from Brazil was thwarted. During these same days the terrorist attacks broke out in even more drastic ways, This time, the attacks centered not only on the small towns but also impacted large districts and strategic locations important from an economic as well as a security perspective.

Our Mission suffered, and still suffers, greatly from these attacks. The mission headquarters in Meluco has not yet suffered any direct action by the terrorists but in the Quissanga district, which we also serve, the two Catholic Christian communities have been totally destroyed.

Faced with the possibility of an imminent attack on the mission headquarters in Meluco, the bishop, Monsignor Luis, advised us to move the headquarters to Pemba. Not because he was alone in that mission but because he was concerned for my protection.

I stayed in Pemba for about 45 days. During this time I had the opportunity to reflect on the mission and the whole journey we have undertaken to come to love these our suffering brothers and sisters even more and to identify with their pain. After much reflection and sharing with the Generalate, the Bishop and the Provincial, as well as with some confreres and the elders of the local community, I wrote a letter to the bishop on Good Shepherd Sunday expressing my desire to return to the mission in Meluco. Bishop Luis called me on Monday and we spoke together about the situation. He imposed some conditions for my return since the attacks had diminished but were certainly not over; up to this time Meluco had not been attacked. I accepted his instructions and after spending a week with the OLSH Sisters, I returned to the mission.

We had to reorganize ourselves and put things back in order after our long absence. We returned to buildings where construction work had stopped, built the catechetical centre and started work on the pastoral hall for the community. With the pandemic still on the increase we sought, together with the diocese, ways to draw closer to the people, while maintaining a concern for the protection of all from the virus. The bishop offered us the possibility of having a community radio, because of the strategic situation of Meluco. I was encouraged by the idea and we are looking at how we can make our radio a reality.

Unfortunately we had to celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart at the end of May in a climate of fear because the neighbouring district had been attacked and we felt trapped, without any means of communication for about 10 days. We were also without power. Once communications had been restored the bishop once again summoned us to return to Pemba in order to take part in a meeting of all the missionaries of the northern region of the diocese who had been affected by the attacks.

I was able to communicate with the General Council via Fr Humberto and with the Province of Sao Paulo through the provincial. I spoke with them about my decision to stay on the mission, even if this was against the advice of the bishop. A week later the sisters and I returned to Meluco.



On our return we became engaged in working to support the displaced and I began to care for a much larger number of sick people in our home. Little by little we were able to resume our pastoral activities following the guidelines of the diocese and the government with respect to the pandemic.

Once again the Bishop urged us to return to Pemba with the utmost urgency. At this time the attacks were occurring further away from our mission and were becoming more a common part of ordinary life. Once again I put the question to the General Council through Fr Humberto – as well as to the Provincial. However, by this time it was no longer possible to negotiate with the bishop about staying on the mission. The Sisters of St Joseph of Chambery were already under the control of the terrorists in Mocimba da Praia, another district served by the diocese. As a consequence we were the only foreign missionaries

remaining in the diocese and as such posed a threat to the safety of the local people as well as being a strategic point for the terrorists. Seeing no other alternative I returned to Pemba.

At that time only the bishop, two priests of the La Salle congregation and I knew that the Sisters had been kidnapped from the beach at Mocimba. I made myself available to the bishop in any way I could be useful, since at that time there were no members of the local clergy who were available to go and rescue the sisters on account of the conditions the terrorists had imposed for their release, without the total involvement of the military. If their conditions were not observed they threatened to take the lives of the sisters of any one who tried to rescue them. Dom Luis was unwilling to allow us to go to deliver the ransom but when he realised that he had no alternative, he agreed that we should stay at the

parish house at Meuda which was close to where the sisters were being held. I and Fr Edegard,MS from Saletino went and stayed at the parish house, together with the two priests who were living there, for about 15 days before we were able to effect the release of the sisters. After we had welcomed the sisters they were flown to Pemba by military plane and in order to protect ourselves we left the scene by road. For almost two months we took shelter to ensure our safety. Fr Edgard,MS and I are now finishing the paper-work which will be filed with the diocese as a part of the record of all negotiations with the terrorists.

In the last few days Bishop Luis has made a number of suggestions regarding future pastoral work and a place to live until the war is resolved. After many comings and goings we have decided to stay together in a house that the bishop has offered us. For the time being I

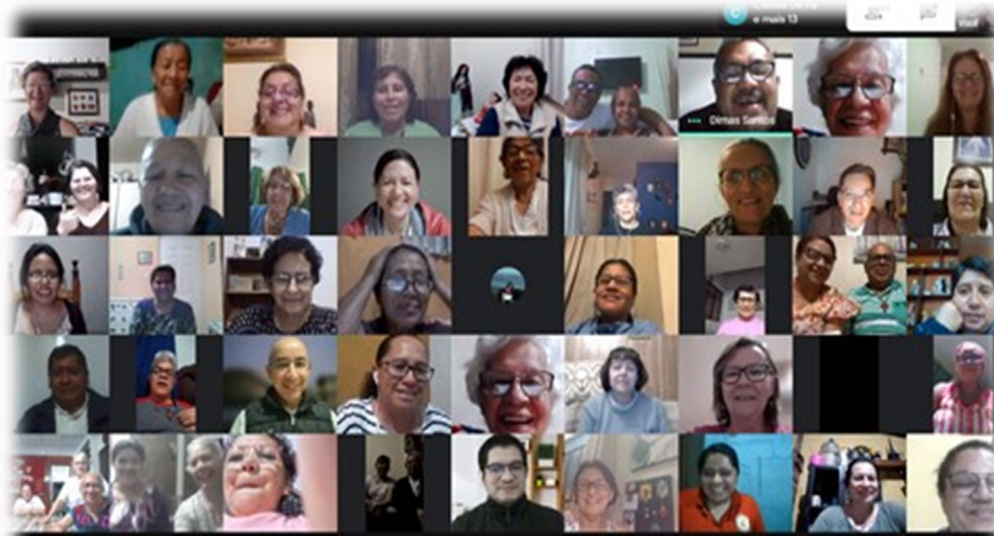
will continue to live in this house in Pemba, forming an inter-congregational community with the two La Salette Fathers. During this time we will serve two parishes in neighbouring districts in Pemba. As soon as the borders are open once again to foreigners we hope to welcome two more MSC from Brazil to join the mission.



Learning to readjust one's life has been the context of the mission this year. I would like to register my gratitude to all the confreres who have been solicitous for the welfare of this mission with great affection and concern. May God reward them from his generosity. Now, more than ever before, we need to be in solidarity with those displaced families who already number over half a million. Jesus' cry on the cross, "My God, my God why have you abandoned me" continues to be echoed in these suffering brothers and sisters.

| Fr. Eduardo, MSC—(Mozambique)

"THE ROSARY FOR LIFE" UNITES THE LAITY OF THE CHEVALIER FAMILY IN AMERICA



another rosary. I said both of them every day, while at home, doing this routine on weekends. I heard and found grace from my father commenting that I would become a saint in life, from praying the rosary so much. I recited them as poetry, without understanding part of what I was saying. Neither in Catechesis did I learn the real power of praying the Rosary. Many years later, a Catholic, not a practicing Catholic, but a

Three times I have lived moments with the Holy Rosary, the divine symbol of the Mother of Jesus and Our Lady, for my contemplation and understanding of her power in my life.

I first encountered the Rosary at the age of four, in the hands of a very Catholic Portuguese woman who, daily, at the same hour, with her elbows resting on the table, held a rosary, while reading her black and large accounts. She prayed without taking her eyes off those beads. She turned them forward, backwards, without interrupting her reading. And I would always ask someone to take me in D. Matilde's Rosary. My mother asked me if I didn't want to learn to pray it, and I answered, I don't know how to read yet, Mother. How can I read the rosary prayers in the accounts? Years later, I discovered that the prayers were not read, but were decorated and recited.

When I was ten years old, I went to study in a school whose headmaster, a very Catholic man, gathered the officials, teachers and students in a shed one hour before the morning session to pray the rosary. My mother, aware of my great admiration for the rosary, allowed me to join the group. I quickly discovered that the distance between my home and school was the exact time it took for me to pray

Christian in my attitudes, when I returned from a medical appointment for my eldest daughter, 16 years old, desperate for the diagnosis, passing in front of the Shrine of Souls in Niterói, I entered and for the first time I spoke with the Lady of the Sacred Heart. It was a conversation from mother to mother. I begged, not for her life, but for her health, there were many dreams that had to be erased. After an indefinite time of conversation, I left invigorated, confident. I gave over to her my pain. My daughter today is a Bio-Medical Scientist and a Professor in undergraduate and graduate medical courses.

I entered and never left that Temple. I participated in several Pastorals and Movements. I learned to pray, I took advantage of all the moments of formation offered to the Parish Community, until I was invited to be part of the group of Lay Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. I assumed the commitment of being and acting as a member of the Chevalier Family.

We came to the Corona Virus Pandemic and had to distance ourselves physically. We began to miss our meetings, moments of prayer and mission. In the midst of this human tragedy, we had to create paths of spirituality for so many ills of the body.

We had to support ourselves, to learn again how to seek strength for our hearts bleeding from loss. And it was there that Doris our Coordinator presented us with the proposal to say one Rosary a week, to pray for the infected and for those who have lost their loved ones. This prayerful moment was called the Rosary for Life.

Lay communities from other countries were invited to join us. Brazil, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Peru, Ecuador, and Paraguay are currently participating in the Rosary for Life.

Within Brazil we have the presence of lay people from the states of Paraná, Santa Catarina, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, Mato Grosso, Sergipe and Maranhão.

The Rosary for Life is prayed every Monday at 8 p.m., the first half hour being for the entrance to the room and the moment of Coexistence. Every week a religious person is invited, a priest or some other speaker who brings us, as formation and information, the Word or his experience as LFC in mission.

For the third time I have the Rosary in my life. At this moment I already read its mysteries with the eyes of my heart. I no longer recite. I have learned the meaning of the verses and I pray, with much faith, to give thanks and to ask for blessings.

Holy Rosary, divine symbol of the Mother of Jesus and Our Lady, which will always be for contemplation and understanding of her power in our lives.

| *Eliane Pacheco—(Brazilian Lay)*

“COR VITAE STILL THROBS!”

The Cor Vitae Team has lost one of its significant members, its coordinator, Fr Sam, who was elected the new Provincial Superior of the Indonesian Province last February 12, 2020. Soon after this we were struck by the Covid-19 pandemic which meant that our 2020 programs had to be grounded and the future of any 2021 programs remained uncertain.

On August 18 Fr Ben Alforque of the MSC Province of the Philippines was formally welcomed as new member of the team by Cathie fdnsc and Sophy msc. In the reconfigured team, Cathie is now the coordinator, Sophy the treasurer and Ben the secretary. The ExeCom also welcomed Ben to the team at our joint meeting on 6 October.

Chris facilitated an online meeting between the members of the Tri-Generalate and the Cor Vitae team on October 12. The view was expressed that in the current circumstances Cor Vitae is needed more than ever. The team was given the go-ahead to revisit the program and hold consultations with the leadership of APA and Anglophone Africa.

Currently, Cor Vitae is in communication with both of these groups, in consultation around a central question: in the pandemic situation, how best can Cor Vitae be of service to you and your community?

Thanks you for your continued interest in, and support for the team and the CV program.

| *Cor Vitae Team*
(*Sr. Sophy, MSC; Fr. Ben, MSC; Sr. Cathie, FDNCS*)



ARRIVAL AT GENERAL HOUSE FOR A NEW MINISTRY

My dear confreres, I am Benny Laisina MSC. I remember that last year I participated in the MSC Bursars' Meeting in Rome from 2 to 20, 2019. All the provincial and union bursars were present from many places and countries. I came from our Provincial House in Jakarta, Indonesia. While in Rome I met many confreres as well as some lay people, working as bursars in various provinces. All the members of the General Council supported and followed the meeting. For about eight days we participated in a good program with a good process, as we learned about the ministry of bursar. There were also some inputs on various subjects from experts who enabled us to discuss and learn together.

Unfortunately, at the end of December 2019, everything started to change with the coming of the Coronavirus which started to spread through many countries. As a result Italy went into 'lockdown' for some months as the number of cases increased.

Our nation has been experiencing a similar situation since March 2020. As a result I could not take up my new ministry in the General House. I waited for some months for the necessary permit from the Italian Embassy and the Indonesian Government to enter Italy. Fortunately I received the permit in mid-October. I left Indonesia on October 17 on Turkish Airlines, transited through Istanbul and arrived in Rome the following day after a long but smooth trip. Polce and Aris met me at Fiumicino Airport.

I had to spend 14 days in quarantine in the General House, following the Italian protocol regarding Covid-19. Praise the Lord my condition and health remained good after the two weeks of isolation and on the next day I was able to join the other members of the General House community in a Safeguarding Workshop organized by Tim Brennan and Chris Chaplin. It was a very good and useful workshop.

In my days in the General House I was able to meet with and work together with Hans Nagla to acquire an understanding of my ministry as General Bursar; I acquired a lot of information and explanations from him. I realize that the ministry of the General Bursar is a trust that has been given to me, with a big responsibility to the General Council and the whole Congregation. Together with Hans I also participated in the Meeting of the FAB (Financial Advisory Board), discussing the Annual Financial Report and the Budget of the Generalate.

The FAB consists of five core members (Michael, Gerard, Mary, Rinus and Andre). It provided me with some good reports and important inputs, considerations and corrections for the Annual Financial Report and the Budget. I felt how it played an important and useful role in assisting the General Bursar to work well, optimally and effectively. My thanks for the support of the FAB and the General Council for this ministry. I hope that the communication and cooperation between us, the General Bursar, and all the Provincial and Union Bursars will remain good and improve day by day for the future well-being of the Congregation.

| Benny Laisina, MSC

We affectionately affirm these brothers of ours mentioned below. We hope that their commitment will be without reservation to make the Heart of Jesus loved everywhere.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>APPROVAL</u>
October.2020	Thomas DAIMOL	PNG	PRIESTHOOD
October.2020	Ezechiele Arsene Couly NDIONE	UAF	DIACONATE
October.2020	Djidjou Raphael Aime CHIEGAIN	UAF	DIACONATE
October.2020	Amougou Geroges Angel ZANG	UAF	DIACONATE
October.2020	Pegdewende Romain Evariste KYELEM	UAF	DIACONATE
October.2020	Gregoire Fabien NDZANA ETEME	UAF	PRIESTHOOD
October.2020	CHESTER Alberto Perez Robiero	CENTRAL AMERICA	DIACONATE
October.2020	RIGOBERTO Pineda	CENTRAL AMERICA	DIACONATE
October.2020	John the Baptist HANUK BAE	SOUTH KOREA	DIACONATE
November.2020	RONEY Lima dos Santos	RIO DE JANEIRO	PERPETUAL VOWS
November.2020	PARTICK da Silva Poli dos Santos	RIO DE JANEIRO	PERPETUAL VOWS
November.2020	Washington PABLO de Oliviera Moura	RIO DE JANEIRO	PERPETUAL VOWS
November.2020	TIAGO Donizete de Paula Lopes	RIO DE JANEIRO	PERPETUAL VOWS
November.2020	Mathias BATFIAN	INDONESIA	PRIESTHOOD
November.2020	Yos Haris RUBAN	INDONESIA	PRIESTHOOD
December.2020	ADROALDO Affonso Welter	CURITIBA	DIACONATE

MORTUI - (OCTOBER—DECEMBER)

<u>NAME</u>	<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>WHERE HE DIED</u>
Yosef Linus Sumakud	INDONESIA	14.10.2020	Jakarta
Georges Henri Teasdale	CANADA	22.10..2020	Santo Domingo
Casimiro Kito	PAPUA NEW GUINEA	27.10.2020	Port Moresby
Piet van Mensvoort	NETHERLANDS	28.10.2020	Manre
Yves Turcotte	CANADA	28.10.2020	Ste-Agathe-des-Monts
Tatieru Ewentang	PACIFIC UNION	02.11.2020	Marshall Island
Leo Gesp	BELGIUM	02.11.2020	Louvain
André Bernard Bremond	FRANCE	10.11.2020	Chambéry
Paul Desaulniers	CANADA	11.11.2020	St-Augustin-de-Desmaures
Joseph Thomas	NORTH GERMAN	17.11.2020	Münster
<u>Antoon</u> Gerardu	NETHERLANDS	23.11.2020	Tilburg
Paulinus Fangohoi	INDONESIA	28.11.2020	Tanimbar Islands
Gérard Huot	FRANCIA	01.12.2020	Marseille

THE MSC MARTYRS OF EL QUICHE, GUATEMALA *(They will be beatified along with 7 laymen on 23 April 2021)*

In this bulletin, published in the context of the 166th anniversary of the foundation of the MSC Society, we would like to share with you this beautiful and significant tribute from the Spanish MSC Province to the memory of our three MSC Confreres who were assassinated, along with so many others, during the 1980s in El Quiche, Guatemala. We hope that these reflections on the significance of this beautiful and valuable art-work will not only serve to remind us of our 3 confreres but also of the other 7 laymen and (as I mentioned above) those thousands of victims who, because of their faith and commitment to justice were murdered in Guatemala. This memorial can also serve as the opportunity to make our voice heard in the face of so many injustices that continue to occur in every part of the world and cry out for our commitment and prophetic denunciation.

The following are the presentations made at the time of the unveiling of the painting by those responsible for its composition:

Presentation made by Fr Manolo Barahona MSC:

In paying tribute to the memory of these three MSC, we wanted this painting to reflect their lives as missionaries who worked side by side with their people, sharing their lives, listening to their problems. It was their ardent desire to bring the Good News of Jesus to their people at all times. They were above all MISSIONARIES, then MARTYRS and, therefore, BLESSED.



In the lower section of the painting we wanted to represent two things: the image of Christ with Mayan features before whom the martyred bodies of the three missionaries were laid to rest in Chichastenango. Naturally, the background includes the mountains of Quiche, the environment in which our three brothers carried out their missionary work. Here we wanted to symbolize their mountains, villages, churches – the houses of their people, the corn that is their staple food. In the background the sky is half sad and half bright. In that brighter area we can clearly imagine our three Spanish and Guatemalan missionaries.

Testimony by the creator of the painting, the artist Goyo Dominguez:

Paining this portrait of the Martyrs of Quiche has been, without doubt, a professional challenge - but also a great personal experience. As I read the book “They gave their Lives”, and became aware of the personalities of Faustino, Juan Alonso and Jose Maria, I felt that this work, even though it was meant to be an allegorical scene, had to transmit a sense of closeness and truthfulness.

I was impressed by the joy they revealed in working in Guatemala with the most humble people and in a difficult environment. The raw story of their deaths touched me and their courage stirred my admiration. I wanted to convey these feelings through the use of colour and composition.

The composition is structured on three levels. In the foreground is a felled tree pierced by three axes, symbolic of the violent deaths of the three priests. On the trunk, as on an altar, are the elements of the Eucharist. Next to it a crucifix, with the Mayan Christ, is my interpretation of the crucifix that presided over the burning church during the funeral of the three martyrs. This is a personal version of the image that I have made thanks to the information provided by Fr Manolo Barahona, since the photograph of the event is not very clear and rather confusing. Next to the Mayan Christ is a green branch which is sprouting, symbolic of the strength of faith.

In the background the composition first there is the portrayal of two indigenous peasants with Juan Alonso with one knee on the ground, that humble earth that received his body after his martyrdom. Next is Faustino, represented in his role as a catechist, “serene, peaceful, constant and faithful”, accompanying the young people of El Quiche in order to bring them to Jesus. On the right, Jose Maria Gran is depicted in his missionary work, speaking with a young woman who is showing him new paths, pointing out new people to whom he can carry the Gospel.

In the background is the landscape of El Quiche with its mountains, valleys and that sky that so often illuminated and filled their hearts with peace when they contemplated it at dusk.

I hope that this work will help to transmit to those who see it, the love that Faustino, Juan Alonso and Jose Maria had for the simple people of El Quiche and for this beautiful land – a love that led them to “give their lives for their friends”.



SEASONS OF CREATION

On the last day of the **Season of Creation**, on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the community of the Casa Generalizia wanted to join in the **Jubilee of the Earth** promoted by Pope Francis, by planting an olive tree in the grounds around the house. It is still small, but our hope is great that it will one day bear its much appreciated fruit in this eternal city. This has been a year in which we have been celebrating the anniversary of the publication of the *Laudato Si* encyclical five years ago. In order to make progress in our fight against climate change, the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development (DPIHD) will, as of May 2021, implement a 7-year action program in the following 7 areas: the cry of the earth, the cry of the poor, the economy, simple lifestyles, education, spirituality and community commitment. In the spirit of integral ecology the aim is to make all the communities around the world, that want to take part in the program, sustainable by 2030.



| André Claessens, MSC

SAFEGUARDING MEETING VIA ASMARA



On the weekend of October 31st and November 1st, the General House “Via Asmara” community participated in its second Safeguarding Weekend workshop for 2020. The community gathered at the nearby conference room of the Ursuline Sisters for reflection and learning in safeguarding approaches.

The weekend was prepared and facilitated by Tim Brennan of the Generalate Safeguarding Office and Chris Chaplin. The workshop asked us to notice how we are moved at the affective level, to let this influence us, and to discern the invitation that these movements are offering to us in terms of our behaviour. At the heart of safeguarding is our concern for victims and the protection of the vulnerable, especially children. We best provide a safe environment for them when a conversion of heart has occurred within us, and when it is at the core of our vocation.

A bonus of our community time together was the strengthening of our bonds of brotherhood. We celebrated this with liturgies and food. Thanks to the whole community for committing themselves to these weekends.

| Chris Chaplin, MSC

WE SAY A GRATEFUL GOODBYE TO HANS NGALA, OUR GENERAL BURSAR

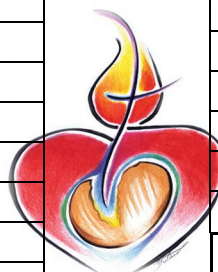
Life in any community but especially in an international community like the General Administration, is not only an environment in which individuals put their gifts at the service of the community, but contribute generously to work with their brothers. This is how we have seen the 14 years of service during which Hans Ngala has been part of our community at Via Asmara in Rome. In addition to his work as General Bursar, Hans has been an attentive, joyful, organized and gentle brother in our community. We are very grateful for the affection with which Hans has dedicated himself to this work and for his commitment to our Congregation during all these years. We wish him strength and good health to continue his mission wherever he is.

Arrivederci HANS!



Statistics on MSC Initial Formation— 2020/2021

ENTITY	Nº FORMANDOS
AUSTRALIA	5
CENTRAL AMERICA & MEXICO	14
SECTION OF COLOMBIA	14
CURITIBA -BRASIL	14
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	29
SECTION OF ECUADOR (CURITIBA)	2
INDIAN UNION	26
INDONESIA	118
IRELAND	1
ITALY	7
PACIFIC UNION	29
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	44



ENTITY	Nº FORMANDOS
REGION OF PERU	3
PHILIPPINES	40
RIO DE JANEIRO—BRASIL	27
SÃO PAULO—BRASIL	28
REGION SOUTH AFRICA (IRELAND)	2
SOUTH GERMAN	1
SOUTH KOREA	4
SPAIN	1
UAF	52
REGION OF VENEZUELA (IRELAND)	2
VIETNAM (AUSTRALIA)	27
TOTAL	490



Ametur MSC



@ametur.msc



AmeturMSC



MSC General Leadership Team



communications@msc-chevalier.org



Website under construction

**Christmas is the light of God's love,
that shines in the darkness of any "Pandemic in the world".
This light was, is and always will be with us!**



Missionaries of the Sacred Heart

General House: Via Asmara, 11 - 00199 - Roma - Italy



English Corrections

Tony Arthur, MSC (Australian Province)

