



# GENERAL BULLETIN

MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART

DECEMBER 2025

## *May The Sacred Heart of Jesus Beloved Everywhere*

Dear Confreres, with gratitude, we conclude a year of walking together in faithful accompaniment with God. As part of the universal Church, we also mark the end of the Jubilee Year 2025, which has been celebrated as a Year of Hope. This year encourages us to reaffirm our faith and hope despite a world full of challenges. For us as the Chevalier family, gratitude is not just an expression but a way of living that guides us to see life as a gift and a calling to remain faithful to our mission.

We are thankful for the General Conference 2025 in Brazil. This gathering was a shared journey that strengthened unity amid diversity and deepened our commitment to walking together in building a service-oriented structure. This year, we also celebrate 171 years since the founding of our Congregation: Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, a long journey supported by God's love and the loyalty of members who continue to dedicate themselves to the Church and the world.

Amid this joy, our hearts also turn to the various natural disasters that have affected many of our brothers and sisters. We are called to remain sensitive, supportive, and compassionate. Finally, we would like to thank everyone who contributed to the publication of this Bulletin, especially the editorial team: Javier Trapero, John Walker MSC, and Simon Lumpini MSC. May this Bulletin serve as a means of strengthening faith, hope, and brotherhood. Happy reading.

| Fransiskus Bram Tulusan, MSC |



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MISSIONARI  
DEL  
SACRO CUORE

December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
MSC General Leadership Team Letter

Via Asmara, 11 – 00199 ROMA

Tel.: 06.862.20.61

**MISSIONARIES OF THE SACRED HEART**  
**171 YEARS OF GRACE AND MISSION**  
*Reading the signs of the times*  
**1854 – 2025**

Dear Confreres,

On this December 8th, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, we celebrate 171 years since the Spirit inspired Fr. Jules Chevalier to dream a new path for the Church and for humanity. It was a small, almost impossible dream, like the cry of Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46-52) rising above the noise, yet because it came from the Heart of Jesus, it continues to resonate today in so many corners of our Mother Earth. This year, that resonance found a luminous expression in the canonization of Peter To Rot, lay catechist and martyr from Papua New Guinea, the first saint of the Chevalier Family, whose witness confirms that our Charism remains fruitful in every culture and in every age.

One hundred and seventy-one years have passed since our Charism first took flesh in history, and yet it remains a humble and resilient force of humanization. Your lives, your mission, and your dedication, together with the whole Chevalier Family, continue to embody that foundational inspiration: to respond to the modern wounds of our world with the meekness, humility, and boldness of the Heart of Jesus.

Today, the cries of the earth and the cries of so many wounded peoples are no less intense than in Chevalier's time. Their suffering runs through wars, migration, poverty, abuse, indifference, and structural violence. And their cries now echo in a new landscape where artificial intelligence and digital technology are shaping how people think, feel, and believe. We live in a world where algorithms learn faster than hearts, where screens mediate many of our relationships, and where the human can easily become secondary.

Precisely for this reason, our Charism is urgent and countercultural. We are called to reveal the face of a God who continues to love with a human Heart, not an artificial one. In a time of artificial intelligences, tenderness remains the powerful force that can transform technology and social media into bridges that bring people closer rather than walls that isolate, opening paths for us to build communion, nearness, and genuine humanity.

May this anniversary find us renewing the prophetic courage of hospitality, capable of creating real conversations, within our MSC communities and with the People of God, amid so many voices that compete, confuse, and manipulate. More than ever, we need a spirituality that does not run away from the digital world but passes through it with humanity, beauty, and truth.

It is precisely in this context that we lived our MSC General Conference, a moment in which we sought to *walk together, building structures that serve*, while keeping our feet firmly on the ground. We know that dreams that do not become concrete, measurable, and accountable processes simply evaporate. For this reason, our mission today requires participation, collaboration, and the humble realism of those who offer their small but essential contribution, knowing that no one is excluded from this shared responsibility.



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This anniversary, lived amid so much external noise, invites us to return to prayer. To cultivate a generative silence in the midst of the noise that erodes trust and weakens our ability to walk together. Yet today we must go even further: we need a prayer capable of keeping us profoundly human in a world that is fast, fragmented, and tempted by the artificial. A prayer that rescues us from digital automatism, restores the depth of our souls, and teaches us to listen before speaking and to look before reacting.

This return to the silence of the Heart leads us to one of the deepest needs of our time: to grow in the attitude of discernment. Personal and communal discernment, slow, evangelical, responsible, able to read the signs of the times, interpret reality, embrace our contradictions, and make decisions with compassion and hope. Jesus is the centre of all discernment, and only in Him do we learn to see with clarity and choose with love. Only a life rooted in prayer and authentic discernment can sustain our mission amid so much complexity and dehumanization.

May Our Lady of the Sacred Heart intercede so that every celebration of this 171st. Anniversary in your communities becomes an opportunity to rekindle our mission, embracing our fragilities without fear: for it is through our cracks that mercy seeps through and the face of God becomes visible in today's world.

Thank you, dear Confreres, for remaining devoted to the mission and for risking your lives, for being present as witnesses where humanity bleeds, where Mother Earth cries out, and where so many are wounded by war, poverty, or abuse. Thank you for embodying, sometimes quietly and sometimes at significant risk, the cry of Bartimaeus, who refuses to stop calling out to Jesus, believing that another world is possible.

May the Heart of Jesus continue giving us new eyes to see and a new heart to love.

In Corde Iesu,

Mario Abzalón Alvarado Tovar *[Writ.]*

Chris Chaplin

Bram Tulusan

Simon Lumpini

Gene Pejo

Carl Tranter



MSC GENERAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

# CURITIBA, BRAZIL

Missionary spirit is not only about geographical territories, but about peoples, cultures, and individuals, because the 'boundaries' of faith do not only cross places and human traditions, but the heart of each man and each woman."

(From his 2013 World Mission Day Message of the late Pope Francis)

For newcomers to Brazil like me and Richie (JPIC Desk-General Administration), witnessing the Brazilian landscape was an awe-inspiring experience. The vast fields and endless pasturelands we passed through beautifully exemplify the meaning of the quote from Pope Francis mentioned above. The mission truly has no boundaries—it reaches deep and wide into the hearts of every person we meet along the way.

After the RENASCO (Réunion Nacional do Concelho) Meeting from August 4-6, 2025, Richie Gomez and I headed to the MSC Province of Curitiba, which covers parts of São Paulo, the states of Paraná, and Santa Catarina. We started in the MSC community in Barra do Turvo, in the Vale do Rebeira region, São Paulo. Three days later, we moved on to Curitiba, which has become our base. From there, we travelled to Francisco Beltrão and then to the picturesque town of Capanema. Two days afterwards, we proceeded to Foz do Iguaçu, and after five days, we headed back to Curitiba. Next, we explored the vibrant town of Florianópolis, where history and modernity blend among natural beauty. After spending time with the MSC community and its people, we returned to Curitiba. Finally, we made our way back to São Paulo on September 3, 2025. The entire trip lasted thirty days.

"...boundaries of faith do not only cross places and human traditions, but the heart of each man and woman"

Before the GLT embarked on its journey to accompany the three MSC Provinces in Brazil (São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Curitiba), I understood that language would play a significant role. However, I never thought it could restrict the way we connect with our confreres. With our devices and Google Translate app at hand, we managed to communicate individually or in informal group chats. Throughout my entire stay, I never felt alienated or disconnected because even during brief or lengthy silences, I felt our hearts remained linked. In our one-on-one conversations, Google may not capture and translate everything we say, but the emotions behind our confreres' desires, hopes, and even some frustrations are expressed through non-verbal cues. The spirit of fellowship was profoundly felt throughout our time with our confreres.

While travelling with Richie Gomez, JPIC (Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation – Desk in Charge), we discovered that a key part of our accompaniment involved engaging with the JPIC initiatives undertaken by our confreres in their parish ministries. It is both fascinating and inspiring to observe that some parishes run ministries that tackle poverty issues, particularly for homeless immigrants. Our conversations and interactions with the Laity of the Chevalier Family, Parish Staff, and volunteers, facilitated by human interpreters, provided





us with insight into their awareness of JPIC matters. The Layty, considering their commitments made at the last International Assembly regarding JPIC, employs various ways and levels to care for the environment.

Another significant experience was the opportunity to engage with non-church groups like ASSESOAR (Association for Rural Studies, Guidance and Assistance), which collaborate either directly or indirectly with the church's JPIC (Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation) work. Participating in some activities organised by Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST), or the landless workers movement, gave us a broader perspective that the people's movement and the fight for land by the landless are very much alive in the area. The visit to a semi-private recycling facility was also an eye-opener, demonstrating a higher level of environmental awareness among the community.

Our journey through the MSC Province of Curitiba would not be successful without the efforts of the Provincial Administration led by their Provincial Superior, Jose Vieira, MSC. The warm welcome from our confreres in each community we visited, along with their efforts to let us experience some of their ministries — even going to remote villages to show how they strengthen faith communities in their respective areas of assignment — is inspiring. Interacting with the young members of the Province, who are full of potential, even those in formation (Philosophy and Theology students), gave us a glimpse of a promising future for the Province. Thank you, MSC Curitiba Province.

**Gene Pejo, MSC, & Richie Gomez, MSC  
(Philippine Province)**





## JAPAN

After Vietnam, I continued my travels to Japan. It took about six hours to fly from Ho Chi Minh City to Nagoya. I arrived in Nagoya on Saturday morning (15 November) and went straight to the MSC community in Johokubashi. My main purpose in Japan was to facilitate a community retreat (17–21 November). The retreat was held in Susono, a peaceful place with the stunning backdrop of Mount Fuji. After the retreat, I had the chance to spend a few days visiting several locations where our confreres are working (Fukui, Ono, Tsuruga, Obama, Sabae, Ogaki, Kakamigahara, and Konan).

### Men with a Mission and Saint Peter To Rot

The theme of this year's retreat was Men with a Mission. Through various sessions of personal reflection, group sharing, and communal prayer, we revisited our identity as religious men sent to proclaim God's compassion in the context of Japan. This deepening of the theme helped each confrere reflect anew on his personal calling and missionary commitment.

One of the primary sources of reflection was the figure of Saint Peter To Rot, a lay catechist from Papua New Guinea who was steadfast in his faith and courageous in witnessing to it until the end of his life. His simplicity, courage in the face of oppression, and commitment to family and community became a mirror for all of us.

Although the Japanese context is very different from Peter To Rot's, his spirit of perseverance and courage in the face of difficulties provided deep inspiration. We realised that the mission is not primarily about visible success, but about faithfulness to the task entrusted by God.

### Strengthening Community Brotherhood

Amid the dynamics of the Church in Japan as a minority, the spirit of fraternity becomes a primary source of strength. This retreat was not only a space for prayer, but also a place to share stories, struggles, dreams, and hopes. I wit-

nessed how each confrere carried the spirit of a "Heart full of compassion" in the way they lived their community life. The confreres shared challenging experiences of ministry, while others offered encouragement through stories of small successes that are often overlooked. In that warm atmosphere, we felt once again like brothers in community, not merely pastoral co-workers.

Beyond the formal sessions, simple moments such as recreation together, afternoon walks around the retreat



area, or enjoying the view of Mount Fuji became opportunities to strengthen fraternity. The retreat reaffirmed that the mission is never carried out alone. Everyone was reminded anew of the meaning of mission: being sent as a community, mutually supporting and strengthening one another.

### A Renewed Spirit for the Mission in Japan

The retreat was not merely a time to pause, but a moment of renewal. The beauty of nature, the deepening of the theme Men with a Mission, the example of Saint Peter To Rot, and the strengthened fraternity all came together as a precious spiritual experience.

When the retreat ended and everyone returned to their respective places of ministry, we carried with us a renewed spirit to be faithful and creative witnesses of God's love in the midst of Japanese society. This retreat reminded us that the mission continues, and that we are called to live it with hearts full of compassion, courage, and togetherness. The focus of a missionary's service is not on harvesting the results, but on the process of sowing the seeds. This is the commitment to always bear witness to God's love, anytime and anywhere: to be on earth the heart of God.

At the end of this sharing, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the MSC confreres in Japan. Thank you for the cooperation and kindness that I experienced during two very meaningful weeks in Japan. Arigatō gozaimasu. **Bram Tulusan, MSC (Indonesian Province)**



## SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL



Our visit to the Province of São Paulo, Brazil, from 7 August to 9 September 2025, was a valuable opportunity to observe directly the dynamics of the ministry and community life of the MSC there. Over the course of more than a month, I witnessed various pastoral activities, engaged with the faithful, and experienced the commitment of my confreres in the Church's mission within the MSC Province of São Paulo in Brazil (São Gabriel Cachoeira, Fortaleza, Itaitinga, Floriano, San Luis, Itajuba).

### Pastoral Challenges

We visited several MSC communities in São Gabriel Cachoeira, Fortaleza, Itaitinga, Floriano, San Luis, and Itajuba. We encountered several issues that we would describe as challenges. Geographically, the service area is very large, with long distances between regions, so pastoral mobility requires significant effort and time. The hot weather is also a challenge for service there. Socially, poverty remains the most urgent issue and affects the well-being of the residents. Additionally, security issues—particularly in certain areas—require vigilance. Not all areas receive enough support from the diocese, so confreres often have to rely on their own initiative and creativity, and thank God, they have been successful so far.

### Grace and Positive Experiences

Amidst these challenges, there are many blessings to recognise. The community remains the main source of strength and encouragement. The confreres demonstrate a warm spirit of brotherhood, supporting one another and creating a 'shared home' that welcomes everyone. The support from the provincial leadership is also a very important element, felt strongly by the confreres there. Their dedication to service is truly inspiring: their commitment to the mission, creativity in pastoral work, and good teamwork with the local community all reflect their fidelity to the MSC charism.



### A valuable experience

We concluded the series of visits with deep gratitude and pride. The presence of the MSC confreres in the Province of São Paulo, especially in the places we visited, was received with respect and love by the faithful. Many expressed that they felt God's presence through the simple yet compassionate service of the confreres. This visit further strengthened my belief that the Church's mission is primarily fulfilled through a heart that loves and is present for others. Thank you to the MSC Provincial Council of São Paulo, particularly Luis Carlos MSC (Provincial Superior), who helped facilitate our visit so the accompaniment could run smoothly. Muito obrigado a todos.

Bram Tulusan, MSC (Indonesian Province)  
& Simon Lumpini, MSC (UAF)



# AUSTRALIA

Four members of the General Leadership Team accompanied all the MSC communities and missions in our historic and large MSC Province of Australia. In this Bulletin, we are sharing, for the moment, only the experience at Monivae College.



**A day of encounters in the spirit of Dilexi te.** Located in Hamilton, in western Victoria, Australia, Monivae College stands in the heart of a vast, peaceful campus, conducive to reflection and integral growth. This place evokes the tenderness of the Lord who says, 'I have loved you with an everlasting love' (Jeremiah 31:3). In this serene atmosphere, it becomes easier to live the spirit of Dilexi te, this invitation to love as Christ loves.

From the moment I arrived, my meeting with the school principal set the tone for a day marked by welcome and listening. The warm exchange reflected the words of Jesus: 'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you' (John 15:9). There was a genuine culture of the heart, faithful to the charism of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

Visiting the classrooms, workshops, and sports fields allowed me to discover an educational community where love is expressed through patience, attention to each individual and a concern for the growth of young people. Each space seemed to echo Christ's commandment: 'Love one another as I have loved you' (John 13:34).

A highlight was meeting with the student leadership team. Their sense of service, their attentiveness, and their commitment testified to a deep desire to translate love into concrete action, responsibility, and fraternity.

The day ended with a shared dinner with the staff in a simple, warm atmosphere. For me, it was a true moment of communion, illustrating what Dilexi te inspires: to love, to meet, to share.

This visit was thus a journey lived in love, enlightened by the Word and carried by the spirit of Dilexi te.

Simon Lumpini, MSC (UAF)

# VIETNAM

I was in Vietnam for about two weeks (1-15 November). The main goal was to meet with my MSC colleagues. I was also thankful to have the chance to meet with the Chevalier lay group there. The following is a sharing of my experiences during my time there. The MSC Vietnam community stands out as one of the youngest MSC communities in Asia, and it is here that you can see remarkable energy, vitality, and strong missionary enthusiasm. Over the past two decades, growth in the number of members, diversity of ministries, and a spirit of service have shown that the seeds of the Sacred Heart Family have taken root and flourished on Vietnamese soil. However, behind this progress, there are also several fundamental challenges that need to be addressed so the community can move towards self-reliance in formation and develop a more solid missionary identity.

### A Young, Dynamic, and Enthusiastic Community

One of the key features of MSC Vietnam is the youthful nature of its community. Many members are in the process of studying philosophy and theology, with a variety of pastoral backgrounds: working with children, supporting people with disabilities, educational initiatives, aid to the poor, as well as administrative roles and school kitchen duties. This diversity broadens the community's understanding of Vietnam's rapidly evolving social landscape.



Formators, priests, and brothers demonstrate closeness to the people and a warm spirit of service—hallmarks of the spirituality of the Sacred Heart. They are proud to be MSC, love their community, and enjoy their studies. The close connection between studies and vocation is a key strength of formation, because from the start members understand how to integrate intellectual life, religious life, and pastoral mission.

### Great Potential for the Future

Several significant potentials are clearly evident in this community. First is a strong sense of vocation. Members do not merely want to become priests or religious; they aspire to be missionaries. Many express their willingness to be sent abroad, not because there is a deficiency of ministry at home, but purely driven by a desire for mission. Another potential lies in the capacity and desire to develop local formation. There is a goal to establish a novitiate in Vietnam and to train qualified and experienced formators. This wish to create a formation system tailored to the local context indicates that the community is entering a phase of consolidating its identity.

In the field of ministry, various forms of pastoral creativity are emerging, such as teaching art in schools for disadvantaged children, engaging in education within large schools, accompanying persons with disabilities, child protection ministry, and serving the poor. This range of ministries provides opportunities for MSC Vietnam to reaffirm its unique mission—pastoral care of the heart and

service to the marginalised. Equally important, the community is also receptive to professional development. They recognise the need for experts in management, leadership, spiritual accompaniment, and safeguarding.

### Challenges and Hopes

Despite its great potential, MSC Vietnam faces several challenges or areas that need attention. For example, in formation, the missionary identity—according to discussions among many confreres—is still not stable. There is also a lack of understanding of safeguarding and Vietnam's political context. Amid these opportunities and challenges, MSC Vietnam holds a very strategic position. An abundance of vocational energy, strong missionary zeal, and support from provincial leadership and the GLT will increasingly build a solid foundation for progress. Self-reliance in formation, deepening of missionary identity, and the development of distinctive ministries are key priorities that deserve focus. With visionary leadership and the willingness of young members to grow, MSC Vietnam has a real opportunity to become an even more vibrant missionary community.

I want to conclude this sharing of experiences by expressing my gratitude to all my MSC confreres in Vietnam. Thank you for facilitating this accompaniment so that it could run smoothly. Your kindness deeply touches me. I am very grateful to have experienced two very meaningful weeks in Vietnam. Thank you, my Brothers.

Bram Tulusan, MSC (Indonesian Province)





# ‘Delexi te’

A call to change our perspective on the poor and poverty

The call to contemplate and imitate the human and divine Heart of Christ in *Deexit Nos* opens the floodgates to a shift in our perspective of the poor in *Delexi Te*. This axiological conclusion stems from Pope Leo's clear and implicit wish to carry on the intention of his predecessor (*Delexi te no3*). Christ, by revealing God's love, showed himself as poor among men and made the poor the special recipients of the Good News. He made the poor 'sacramentals' of his presence, for 'contact with those who have neither power nor greatness is a fundamental way of encountering the Lord of history' (*Delexi te no4*). But encountering Christ in this humanity wounded by weakness, destitution, suffering, or deprivation calls for a conversion on the part of the disciple, starting with a change in how he views the poor and poverty.

## 1. Poverty, a complex and dynamic reality

In his Apostolic Exhortation, the Pope recognises that poverty is not a homogeneous phenomenon. It has many faces and manifests itself in different ways. According to the Pope, among the forms of poverty are "those who do not have the means to provide for their material needs, the poverty of those who are socially marginalised and do not have the means to express their dignity and potential, moral and spiritual poverty, cultural poverty, the poverty of those who find themselves in a situation of personal or social weakness or fragility, the poverty of those who have no rights, no place, no freedom" (no. 8).

In addition to its plural nature, poverty has a dynamic and expansive quality. Indeed, 'to the old forms of poverty that we have become aware of and are trying to combat, new ones are added, sometimes more subtle and more dangerous.' Thus, paradoxically, as society evolves, new forms of poverty are emerging.

This poverty, in its many forms and manifestations, constitutes a veritable 'theological nest,' where Christ speaks through the suffering of its victims. To hear him, we must first relearn how to see the poor differently.

## 2. Seeing the poor differently

In this apostolic exhortation, the Pope observes that our view of the poor is greatly influenced by worldly ideologies and political and economic orientations that present the poor as lazy or lacking in creative intelligence. This is a view that must be discarded, because the vast majority of poor people are not lazy. Many poor people are poor because of historical circumstances that have reduced the social groups to which they belong to a state of being otherwise impossible. In this sense, the Pope argues that among the poor, some do not want to work, perhaps because their ancestors, who worked all their lives, died poor. Many work from morning to night, (...), even though they know that their efforts will only enable them to survive and never truly improve their lives.

Others are poor because they are victims of systematic predation promoted by unjust policies and economic



orientations. These systems favour only a handful of individuals, leaving the masses floundering in misery, while relying on the ideology of meritocracy. However, it is an illusion to believe that only those who have succeeded are deserving.

The poor have not chosen to be poor, nor are they victims of chance or blind fate. Accepting this truth is a prerequisite for discovering Christ in them and for perceiving anew his message, whose secret only they know.

*The poor are not just poor; they are the epiphany of Christ. The attention due to them is not a mere social requirement, but a condition of salvation, a criterion of true worship.*

### 3. The poor are not only poor

Without excluding anyone, God, in the realism of the Incarnation and the unfolding of the plan of salvation history, has shown a preference for the poor (no. 16). Christ was the revelation of this *privilegium pauperum*, presenting himself to the world not only as the poor Messiah, but also as the Messiah of the poor and for the poor (no. 17). In this sense, the poor become places where Christ shows himself; they are the wealth of the Church, in the words of St. Lawrence. Therefore, for the disciple of Christ, the exercise of charity towards the poor, sometimes despised or ridiculed, is no longer an obsession of a few, but a requirement of his faith. Attention to the poor is no longer a matter of simple charity or pure humanism, but the heart of the Church's mission and a fundamental requirement of the Gospel of Christ.

The poor are not just poor; they are the epiphany of Christ. The attention due to them is not a mere social requirement, but a condition of salvation, a criterion of true worship. This true worship of God in the service of the poor has been a fruitful source of holiness for countless men and women throughout the two-thousand-year history of the Church. These saints of all ages, in addition to encountering God in the poor, fought against the incestuous coexistence of opulence and misery. Selfish theories and a culture of indifference sometimes cloud the clarity of this struggle. But the striking testimony of all these saints, from the Fathers of the Church to our contemporaries, teaches us that the poor are more than what we see in them. They are not inferior to us; they are more than beings whose dignity has been wounded by material precariousness, illness, ignorance and weakness. And to perceive this, we must necessarily undergo a conversion of our gaze and break away from all the ideological constructs that seek to present them as something other than what they really are: God's privileged ones.

Romain Danem, MSC (UAF)

# Accompanying to transform

The experience of AEDJ in light of 'Dilexi Te'

In light of Pope Leo XIV's exhortation *Dilexi Te*, Father Jean Christophe Tshimpaka, known as Tony, MSC, shares his experience of supporting marginalised young people in Mbandaka (DRC). He illustrates how Christian charity, expressed through tangible actions, can change lives and reinforce social unity.

In a city where many young girls, deprived of education, become mothers at a very early age and where some boys join street gangs (Kuluna), the Association Agir Ensemble pour le Développement de la Jeunesse (AEDJ), founded in 2020, offers vocational training such as sewing, carpentry, welding, masonry, IT, and others, and supports young people on their journey to independence. These workshops serve as places of rebuilding where everyone can regain confidence and dignity, inspired by *Dilexi Te*, which advocates for genuine love towards the most vulnerable.

According to Pope Leo XIV, the love of Christ is the foundation of all genuine social action. It is not merely a feeling, but a tangible commitment to others. Through AEDJ, training, supporting, and empowering young people becomes a real expression of love. Every young person trained, every trade mastered, and every job secured demonstrates this: the love of Christ manifests itself in action.

Vocational training goes beyond simply gaining technical skills; it helps rebuild confidence and independence.

Young people learn to master a trade, take on responsibilities, and look to the future with hope. The workshops turn into places of transformation where shyness is replaced by expertise and pride in their work.

For AEDJ, this approach supports holistic development: addressing material needs while fostering the growth of responsible and committed young people. Training becomes a tool for liberation and a means of social inclusion. AEDJ's work transforms people as much as it transforms their environment. Young people discover that they can be masters of their own destiny, regain confidence and live with dignity. Some, who were once marginalised or involved in risky activities, reintegrate into society and become role models for their peers.

This transformation also impacts the community: families regain hope, neighbourhoods become more peaceful, and a culture of responsibility and solidarity begins to take hold. AEDJ thus demonstrates that Christian charity, lived out through action, transforms both lives and the social fabric.

Father Tony's pastoral support highlights the Church's role as a mother and educator. She stands alongside marginalised young people, providing a safe space to learn, grow, and rebuild their lives. Meetings and follow-up activities build confidence and motivation. This charity combines social justice efforts by addressing imbalances, offering equal opportunities, and encouraging participation from everyone. As a result, young people receive technical, moral, and spiritual guidance that helps them move towards independence.

AEDJ's experience demonstrates that recovery is a collective effort. Collaboration among young people, trainers, families, and mentors fosters a sense of brotherhood. In Mbandaka, working together means restoring hope and providing tangible opportunities. Fraternity becomes a catalyst for social and personal change, empowering each young person to become a responsible and dedicated citizen.

AEDJ, under the guidance of Father Tony, demonstrates that Christian charity practised through action can change lives, restore dignity, and foster a more compassionate society. Training, accompanying, and supporting young people is not just a social act but an expression of Christ's love that can transform realities. In pursuing this mission, AEDJ continues to be a living example of Christ's love amidst the challenging circumstances in Mbandaka. 'Let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and in truth' (1 Jn 3:18).

Jean Christophe Tshimpaka (Tony), MSC (UAF)

*Collaboration among young people, trainers, families, and mentors fosters a sense of brotherhood.*

# Walking Together Building Structures That Serve

General Conference 2025. São Paulo (Brazil). 14–26 September 2025.

## Day 1: Opening

The MSC General Conference of 2025 took place at the Mosteiro de Itaici in Brazil, bringing Missionaries of the Sacred Heart from around the globe together for 12 days of communal discernment, reflection, presentations, and prototyping for the congregation's future. The event kicked off on 14 September with a solemn Eucharistic celebration led by the Superior General, Fr Abzalon Alvarado MSC, marking the official start of the conference. The sense of unity was evident from the first evening, as participants engaged in shared reflection and collective wisdom, grounding the gathering in fraternity and mission. Day 1 continued with morning reflection sessions where participants shared insights influenced by their diverse ministerial and cultural backgrounds. The afternoon featured the election of a new General Assistant, with Fr. Carl Tranter MSC from the Irish Province appointed to the role. The day wrapped up with an introduction to shifting from an "egosystem" to an "ecosystem" mindset—an invitation to move from individualistic approaches to a collective vision for the congregation. The final session focused on prototyping processes, assisting participants in imagining concrete actions. A closing Mass was celebrated by Fr. Raul Ruiz Mena MSC of the Central America–Mexico Province.

## Day 2: Mission in Europe and Initial Formation

Today started with communal discernment in small groups, using reflection materials provided by the organising committee. A major part of the day focused on understanding the situation of the MSC in Europe, presented by Fr. Carl Tranter. Each group responded to the European reality by identifying hopes, concerns, and opportunities. In the afternoon, participants created prototype models as concrete responses to the challenges faced in Europe. The next theme of the day was Initial Formation, guided by Humberto Enrique. He provided a refresher on the Emmaus document and shared updates on the state of initial formation across the Congregation. Each group was then asked to develop prototypes centred on shaping



formation programs for today. The day concluded with Mass, presided over by Fr. Sylvester Towarakai MSC from Papua New Guinea.

## Day 3: Safeguarding Ministry

Entirely focused on Safeguarding, Day 3 was led by Tina Campbell from the Congregational Safeguarding Office. The morning sessions explored safeguarding realities within each entity and included updates from Rome, clarifications of policy terminology, and discussions on audit processes. After lunch, the focus shifted to Artificial Intelligence and online abuse, highlighting risks to children and vulnerable adults. Participants discussed emerging issues and developed prototypes for safeguarding practices suited to their contexts. The Eucharist was celebrated by Fr. Mesias Neyra MSC from the Andean Union (Peru).

## Day 4: Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

The theme of JPIC shaped Day 4, starting with a morning reflection in the garden and group sharing. The first presentation, by Richie Gomes MSC, addressed the global plastic issue and provided insights from the Congregation's JPIC Commission. After a break, participants examined the connection between JPIC and the Congregation's mission, especially through the lens of the See–Judge–Act methodology used in the Philippines. Groups were asked to develop contextual JPIC prototypes, grounding ecological and social concerns in local realities. The day finished with Eucharist led by Fr. Michael Miller MSC of the USA Province.

## Day 5: Pilgrimage to Aparecida

On Day 5, participants set off early in the morning to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida. They attended a concelebrated Mass at 9:00 AM, presided over by Bishop Manoel Ferreira dos Santos Junior MSC, with several MSC confreres from São Paulo also in attendance. The rest of the day was spent exploring the basilica museum and other pilgrimage sites before heading back to Itaici for the following day's sessions.

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## MSC GENERAL CONFERENCE 2025

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## Day 6: Territories, Formation, and Mission in Europe

Day 6 began with group discernment followed by an overview of recommendations from the 2023 General Chapter, particularly concerning the Territorial Bodies (CA MSC, APIA, PEC, UAF). Territorial group discussions then took place. In the afternoon, participants focused on creating prototypes to address the Chapter's suggestion of establishing an International Formation House. Later, they continued discussions on Mission in Europe, aiming to develop a forward-looking vision for MSC presence there. The day's Eucharist honoured the Korean martyrs and was presided over by Fr. Damaso Shin MSC and Richard Kim MSC. Evening festivities included celebrations for the birthdays of the Superior General and Fr. Carl Tranter's religious life anniversary.

## Day 7: Rest Day

Participants rested and visited Campinas Parish before returning renewed for the final days.

## Day 8: Finance

After the break, Day 8 focused on financial stewardship. Fr. Raul Ruiz Mena opened the session with practical announcements. Participants revisited General Chapter recommendations on finances and received information on the Heart of Life programme from Fr. Chris Chaplin MSC.



Darwin Thatheus MSC presented online about the Global Development Office (GDO). The afternoon Eucharist, presided over by Fr. Paco Blanco MSC, was offered for deceased MSC confreres. The day concluded with financial reporting and budgeting presentations by Fr Benny Laisina MSC and Fr Michael Huber MSC.

## Day 9: General Administration

The day began with a candle-lit ritual led by Damaso Shin MSC. The first session covered Ongoing Formation (OGF), followed by group discussions. Later, Bram Tulusan MSC provided updates on Communication. The afternoon centred on general administration topics: reports from the Secretariat (Richard Suresh MSC), Archives (Gene Pejo MSC), and Postulation (Fr. General). Chris Chaplin facilitated a reflection on all prototypes created so far. Jean Manga MSC of the UAF celebrated Mass.

## Day 10: Integration

Day 10 started with communal adoration. Chris Chaplin explained the process of redacting prototypes, after which groups worked on assigned topics: International Formation House (Europe), Initial Formation, Safeguarding, JPIC, Territories, Communication, Tertiationship, and Future Mission in Europe. In the afternoon, groups presented their prototypes. Mass was celebrated by Samuel Maranresy MSC of the Indonesian Province.

## Day 11: Refinement of Prototypes

Today's activity continued from yesterday, with a focus on integration and prototyping. After each group completed their communal wisdom session, all participants returned to the main conference room. The candle-lighting ritual today was led by Sylvester Towarakai MSC (Papua New Guinea Province). This was followed by an introduction from Chris Chaplin MSC, and then each group continued working on the themes assigned yesterday (International Formation House for Europe, Initial Formation, Safeguarding, JPIC, Territories, International Formation House, Future Mission in Europe, Communication, Tertiationship). Each group was invited to revisit their prototypes and further develop them into more concrete ideas. After the lunch break, everyone returned to present their prototypes. The day finished with Holy Mass celebrated by Cristian Guzman MSC (The Dominican Republic Province).

## Day 12: Closing Day

The final day began with group discernment. After reviewing the conference process, participants gathered for a group photo. Fr. General expressed heartfelt gratitude for the dedication and collaboration that shaped the conference. The event officially concluded with a closing liturgy at 15:30, led by Chris Chaplin MSC, followed by a social night in the evening.

# “Dios es amor – God is love”

## Reflections on Missionary Experience in Cuba

Dios es Amor, God is love, is a quote that describes how grateful I am to God. After receiving the grace of ordination as a deacon, I was entrusted by the Provincial Superior of MSC Indonesia to undertake a mission to Cuba in Latin America.

Honestly! I never imagined I would be sent on a mission overseas. But deep down, I believed this was God's plan and His calling for me. Cuba is a communist country that has officially adopted socialism since the 1959 revolution. Nevertheless, after Pope John Paul II's visit (1998), which called for Cuba to 'open itself to the world, and the world to open itself to Cuba,' the country resumed allowing religious practices, including the Catholic Church. Geographically, Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean, long and narrow, with an area of roughly 109,884 km<sup>2</sup>.

I arrived and was picked up by Padre Phillipus Seno Dewantoro MSC (Padre Felipe) in Havana (the capital city) on 15 November 2024. Then on Monday, 18 November, I began my ministry at the parish of Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes (Our Lady of Mercy). On 16 December 2024, Father Dicky Harold Joseph Ogi MSC (Father Dicky) arrived at the parish to serve together. He replaced Father Victor Kaanubun MSC (Father Victor), who later undertook a new mission in Ecuador.

Thus, there are three of us in this community. MSC confreres from the Dominican Republic province formerly served this parish. They served there for approximately 11



years. This task was then handed over to us, the MSC Missionaries of the Indonesian Province.

On the occasion of meeting with the Provincial Father, P. Samuel Maranresy MSC, before the mission, he told me that my main task was: 'to go to learn the language and culture while learning to be a priest in the mission field.' So, I feel this mission is obvious: to learn to know and understand. I believe that God who calls will guide and direct me wherever He wants, which is always good. Therefore, this reflection is written with the fundamental spirit that God always loves me, because God is love, Dios es Amor.



### Learning through service.

We serve in the Diocese of Guantánamo – Baracoa. This diocese is one of the administrative regions of the Roman Catholic Church in Cuba. It was established on 24 January 1998 by Pope John Paul II. Its territory covers the Province of Guantánamo and the municipality of Baracoa in eastern Cuba. The diocesan centre is located at the Cathedral of Santa Catalina de Ricci in Guantánamo, and it also includes a Co-Cathedral, the Basilica Co-catedral de Nuestra Señora de la Asunción in Baracoa. The number of Catholics in this region is around 200,000 (approximately 39–40% of the total population of around 500,000–510,000 in the diocese). This diocese is led by Mgr. Silvano Hermilio Pedroso Montalvo, Pr.

Historically, this diocese is among the youngest in Cuba, having been formed through the expansion of the Archdiocese of Santiago de Cuba. Because it is relatively young, this diocese only has 13 parishes, including the



parish we serve, the parish of Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes (Our Lady of Mercy)

By 2025, our parish will have five zones and 31 communities to serve. The number of parishioners served is around 1,000. The ministry tasks we carry out in the parish and communities are faith catechesis, celebrating the Eucharist, bringing Holy Communion to the sick, and providing food and drink assistance to those in need.

Eucharistic celebrations are usually held in each main zone and several nearby communities. Communities located in the highlands or mountains (Felicidad Zone and Palenque Zone) are typically visited twice a week (Wednesdays and Sundays). Wednesdays are used for catechesis and faith teaching, while Sundays are for Mass or worship services.

Weeks I and III focus on the Felicidad Zone. Weeks II and IV are dedicated to ministry in the Palenque Zone. In carrying out our ministry, we are supported by the Missionary Sisters of Charity and lay catechists. They are trained by us and the Missionary Sisters of Charity to teach the faith to the community.

I am thankful for the chance to learn how to serve the people. As a young MSC, I believe it is crucial to nurture a spirit of humility to grow. After a year in the Jamaica parish, I saw how vital pastoral presence is. I need to be there to greet people, share happiness with laughter and jokes, and offer support to keep their enthusiasm alive. I acknowledge that life for the people in the parish and across various provinces in Cuba is not easy. I recognise that serving here requires a spirit of sacrifice that comes from the heart.

The people face many life challenges. There are shortages such as a lack of food, limited access to clean drinking water, electricity available only for one or two hours a day or not at all, poor transport between villages and provinces, and many other struggles that are often shared with us. We experience this too because we live in the same area. Amidst these struggles, we strive to be present, offering reassurance and strengthening their faith. With a spirit of 'happy hearts', we aim to touch the hearts of the people we serve. We are eager to listen to those in need and do our best to help. Honestly, we also face the same struggles with the restrictions imposed by the state.

Despite the many shortcomings we face, we remain committed to serving the people. Catechesis of the faith is very important for the community because many of them do not yet have a proper and accurate understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church. Teaching must be delivered consistently so that they can grasp the message.

I realise how vital it is to cultivate a spirit of sacrifice and humility in service. All of this is for the salvation of the souls we serve. It also helps us fulfil the MSC's mission to make the Sacred Heart of Jesus loved worldwide. Amen.

**Agustinus Nicolaus Yokit, MSC (Indonesian Province)**

# Trust in Humaneness

## Ministry of Presence in Prison

My name is Mark Van Beeumen (MSC). Since May 2022, I have been working as a chaplain in the prison in Antwerp (Belgium), which is an 'arrest house', where people are kept on remand before their trial.

When I first started working there, I wondered whether people in prison would want to see a pastor, but after just one day it became quite clear: "they are happy to have someone they can talk to in confidence." The conversations can be about anything. There are no taboos: 'It can be about life in prison, about the problems they experience, about their case, about family, about faith or other things.' Some ask for a Bible or a rosary as a good luck charm for their trial or as support in difficult moments.



We also celebrate Mass on a Sunday in the chapel, separately for men and women. I do not use traditional Catholic songs, but songs with deep meaning. "We recently started a sharing group with the men, at their own request, starting from the lyrics of the songs. The songs are applied to their lives, often after there has been some time of letting off steam. But the conversations are always very good." I experience a great deal of trust from the people in prison, and that makes me humble. Sometimes a conversation ends in prayer and occasionally in confession; sometimes someone asks for a blessing. Sometimes I explain that a blessing is not a magic formula but rather expresses hope and the desire that things will go well for them. That is also the importance of the wish for peace in Mass. I always wish everyone peace and shake their hand. I do not judge people; I leave that to God.

I start from a position of trust in people, not mistrust. I experience that this is why people also trust me. What you give, you receive. I sometimes tell them something about myself as well, even though a prison officer advised me never to do so. But that is how trust and dialogue are created. A chaplain does not hold a position of power and is not perceived as a threat.

I have done many different things in my life, in other places around the world. I worked with street children and in a hospital in Fiji; with homeless people and refugees in a multicultural neighbourhood in Brussels; I did community work through 'presence ministry' in Aston (Birmingham); and I worked in a supermarket there (the best way to get to know people in the neighbourhood). And yet, the most satisfaction I get from my work in prison.'

Someone once asked me why the presence of prison chaplains is important and where 'hope' lies. I put that question to the people themselves. "Knowing that there is someone there for them, who listens to them, from person to person, who does not judge and that they can be who they are." One of the works of mercy is "to set the prisoners free." We can lighten the load a little or bring some peace to the chaos in their lives. When I hear, "you helped me through this because I can be myself," that is a wonderful compliment. Hope lies in the space that is created in and through care.

One last important aspect I would like to mention is the fantastic team of chaplains in our prison. I work with some incredible people. It is important that we can "come home" to each other. And then there are the colleagues in the many prisons in Flanders and Brussels. Talk about humanity. Who was it again that said "God loves with a human heart"??

Mark Van Beeumen, MSC (Belgian Province)

# Reflection on Earthquake Emergency Relief

Davao Oriental, Philippines

Five days after the 7.4 magnitude earthquake hit the southeastern region of the Philippines, our team rushed to the most affected communities to deliver emergency food relief and carry out Psychological First Aid (PFA) for those traumatised by the disaster.

We joined a group of volunteers in partnership with the European Union, responding together to the cries of people who lost homes, livelihoods, and peace of mind.

What awaited us was both overwhelming and humbling—a vast crowd gathered in open spaces, anxious and restless as aftershocks continued to shake the ground from time to time. To bring some sense of order and safety, we began organising the crowd according to age groups, recognising that each group carried its own particular pain and need. Children required reassurance and calm; the elderly needed gentle presence; and families longed for food, comfort, and peace of mind.

Amid the chaos and uncertainty, we uncovered a profound truth: one of the most meaningful responses to disaster is presence, being with the people. Simply listening to their stories, sharing their silence, and letting them know they are not alone became an act of healing itself. We couldn't remove their pain, but we could accompany it. We couldn't undo the loss, but we could stand beside it. The stories we heard were filled with fear, shock, and echoes of trembling hearts that still feared the next quake.



Yet within those same voices, we also sensed a fragile strength—a resilience born from faith and shared suffering. As Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC), we live out the mission of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC). This experience became our first authentic encounter with putting that mission into practice amidst a tragic and wounded reality. Here, justice meant showing solidarity, peace meant listening, and integrity of creation meant standing in awe of both human fragility and divine compassion.

## Echoes within from the Volunteers

**Erick Bryan de Mattos, MSC.** It was my first time experiencing an earthquake. In Brazil, we don't have such opportunities, and this chance to participate in the MSC-European Union joint relief operation was truly transformative. Responding to a natural disaster was new to me, but it became a genuine learning experience. I realised that even the smallest act of giving—a handful of food packs—can warm hearts and inspire gratitude. Each smile we received was a quiet reminder that faith, hope, and love stay alive even amid the ruins.

**Bro. Hendrick Qoqletkop, MSC.** Participating in earthquake relief operations was an eye-opening experience. Being with people who suffered so much reflected my own human vulnerability. Through Psychological First Aid (PFA), we listened to those traumatized by the tragedy. I learned to value teamwork and to see the unique gifts





each person contributes. Although I had witnessed earthquakes before in Papua New Guinea, joining a relief team like this was entirely new to me. This experience pushed me beyond my comfort zone to reach out, to rescue, to save lives, and to rediscover the core of our mission. If the same situation occurs in Papua New Guinea again, I now know what to do. Yes, I handed out a piece of food, but I was the one who received so much more in return.

**Bro. Anthony Tongala Victor, MSC.** Joining the emergency relief efforts, I personally heard the people's lamentations. Many believed it was the end of the world, the second coming of the Lord. Their words troubled me and made me ask: How can we truly help? How can we bring calm to those in distress?

Through this, I learned the ministry of presence — simply being there with them. While material aid like food packs was crucial, I realised that their deeper hunger was for compassion and connection. Our presence itself became a form of relief. Seeing their faces light up with smiles

reminded me that hope can rise even from fear. In truth, they became my teachers, showing me what faith looks like in the midst of suffering.

**Fr. Richie Gomez, MSC.** One encounter profoundly moved me. A man approached after receiving relief goods and asked, 'Father, can I request a Bible?' At that moment, I realised how tragedy often prompts people to turn to God more deeply. As I listened to their stories, one described it as a 'double trauma.' The first was the earthquake itself; the second occurred when, after the quake, a tsunami alert was issued. Their island community was the epicentre, so everyone — children, mothers, elders — rushed to the boats, fleeing from the island in panic. Since then, aftershocks have continued. For days, they slept in makeshift tents, afraid to return home. Fishermen didn't dare go to sea, and farmers avoided their fields, haunted by the question: What if it happens again and I am not with my loved ones? Listening to these stories was heartbreakingly. Yet even in their fear, their faith remained firm. They showed me what it means to hope in darkness, to find God's presence amidst trembling ground.

This experience of earthquake relief operations revealed that disasters are not only physical ruptures of the earth but also spiritual awakenings of the human heart. We learned that healing begins not only with food and medicine but with companionship and compassion — the simple reassurance that "you are not alone."

Walking alongside those who suffer, we too undergo transformation. Their wounds become lessons for us; their endurance turns into our prayer. Amid the trembling earth, we find a deeper stillness, where the Heart of Christ beats with every heart daring to hope again.

**Richie Gomes (Philippine Province)**

## Where is God in all this?

Humankind has inflicted pain, suffering, and violent deaths on itself in plentiful proportions, especially in the 20th century and continuing in the 21st century. We have been in crisis with the unnecessary killing of innocent human beings through war, mega murders, genocide, poverty, starvation, and other forms of violence. Government-sanctioned murders of innocent individuals have reached the mark of over 169 million since the pre-20th century. These horrific actions create a miserable state of affairs and deny any purposeful and meaningful existence. They can induce a profound spiritual crisis of faith in a loving and caring God.

For some, the crisis leads to complete disbelief. Inevitably, we ask: Where is God in all this? Where is the presence of God in the midst of so much suffering among his people? Why does God allow so many innocent individuals to suffer from the world's different social ills? These queries were brought

to the forefront during the Jewish Holocaust, not only from Jews but from Christians as well. They continue to be asked in the present day. In a sense, the answer is unknowable. God's will is ultimately a profound mystery. Still, such questioning cannot be ignored. The innocent victims who experience unbearable suffering deserve a response.

Answers such as "God is testing us" or "This is God's will or punishment for sins" do not seem to be satisfactory answers for the victims, nor for the modern conscience. It's difficult to believe that God continues to make his sons/daughters suffer gravely while telling us, "I'm testing you. I love you. That is why this is happening to you. The more you suffer, the more I love you." Stating that God willed over 61 million persons to be savagely murdered under the Soviet Gulag State can hardly ease the victims' conscience and the pain from the loss of loved ones. It is

even more horrifying to claim that God, a God of love, willed these things. Additionally, punishment for sins cannot hold as a convincing argument for the innocent, especially the children who must endure so much misery. Another answer comes from the idea that we were created on this earth to suffer. If this belief were true, then there would have been no need for Christ “to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind.” (Luke 4:18). While suffering is an inevitable part of life, it is more reasonable to believe that God created us out of love, not for the fixed purpose of suffering.

During the Jewish Holocaust, there was a cry to God for liberation from the Nazi oppression. Their lament surfaced from the deep recesses of their hearts. Some harboured intense anger towards God, questioning how He could permit such atrocities to befall them. God had become deaf to the cries of humanity. In their anguish and torment, they believed that compassion and justice had departed from the earth. A significant number of Jews lost their belief in God. Following their liberation from Nazi rule, some Jews held the belief that God, not Hitler, should face legal proceedings.

Sentiments such as these continue today. God is to be placed on the docket. His people play the role of plaintiffs. Believers are quick to criticise this courtroom analogy, but if placed in the proper context, it can be cathartic for the release of much built-up anger and hostility. The legal system can be a legitimate means to vent one’s anger, despair, and agony and to seek answers to questions deep within the heart. In the Old Testament, Job can be described as the plaintiff, questioning the defendant, God. Micha also has God in the courtroom.

Challenging God can be a legitimate expression of one’s anger. This is not contrary to the spirit of the gospels. Martha’s words were, in a sense, a challenge to Christ when he arrived at her house after Lazarus’ death: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” (John 11:21) The Canaanite woman challenged Jesus after he initially refused to cure her, saying, “Please, Lord, for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.” (Matthew 15:27) This could have been a wake-up call to the human Jesus.

So where is God in all this? Where is the God of love and compassion and the liberator of mankind in the midst of so much unnecessary suffering? Despair and hopelessness, along with rejecting God due to doubt, are not the answer. Both the Old and New Testaments have an extraordinary and powerful truth about God’s presence in human tragedy. The truth is that God is present in our suffering brothers and sisters. God does not abandon His people. God is the humble One who appears in a lowly bush on a mountain in the wilderness rather than on a king’s throne in a majestic forest. God can always be found with the lowly. The Incarnation attests to the fact that God is one who places limits on Himself in order to

be one with His people. In Christ, we see a heart that shares in the sufferings of his brothers and sisters. This meek and humble heart not only cries to the Father for liberation from the evils inflicted upon the human family.

The Incarnation is the most visible reality of God, who empties Himself to be in solidarity with God’s people. Jesus is beside the suffering human family. Alongside his brothers and sisters, his heart also yearns for freedom from evil. In Jesus, the Powerful One becomes powerless. If Christ is present among the persecuted and oppressed innocent, where then is there a resurrection? We can inform them that their sufferings will end because there will be a resurrection in the life hereafter. This, however, can be a simplistic response that can hold back responsibility and action on the part of the Christian community. The Irish philosopher and statesman Edmund Burke said, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for beneficial men to do nothing.” It is fascinating to see how people around the globe unite in solidarity to help those victims of natural disasters, but there always seems to be a majority who remain silent when humans perpetrate evil actions that place others in deadly peril. The majority of people in Russia were pious and peaceful Christians, but an insufficient number spoke out against the killing of over 61 million minorities in the Soviet Gulag State. The majority of people in China were good and peaceful people, but tacitly complicit when over 35 million of their people perished from the Chinese Communist Ant Hill. Over 20 million murders occurred under the Nazi regime, despite the presence of good and peaceful people. With a majority of beneficial and peaceful people present, Japan’s savage military killed over 5 million. The mass murders of the Khmer Rouge, Turkey’s genocidal purges, the Vietnam War, Poland’s ethnic cleansing, Pakistan’s cut-throat state, Tito’s slaughterhouse, and North Korea can be included, where the majority of the people were charitable and peaceful, but only a courageous minority of them took action to end the destruction of human life. The same can be said about local communities in which the majority who are charitable take no action against violence and deaths inflicted on innocent life.

Faith in Christ impels his disciples to action. It is the Christians’ obligation and responsibility to act as witnesses to the Gospel, not only in thoughts and words, but essentially in deeds. For “if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looks like...faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (James 1:22-24; 2: 17; cf. Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23). We cannot meet the tragedies inflicted upon humanity today in silence. Witness to the Gospel is an act of love and justice that establishes the truth of God’s presence in the world. Christ, through the Holy Spirit, manifests in the Christian testimony of liberation to renew the earth per the Father’s will. **Warren Perotto, MSC (USA Province)**

# “In the Heart of the Storm, the Heart of Christ”

## A Pastoral Reflection on the MSC Mission Response to Recent Calamities

In the wake of successive natural disasters, first the earthquakes in Cebu and Davao Oriental, then the battering winds and floods of Typhoon Tino, followed by the devastation of Super Typhoon Uwan, the Philippine Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC) once again finds itself at the frontlines of compassion.

These calamities have left deep scars: homes destroyed, churches flooded with sheltered evacuees, lives lost, and communities displaced. Yet amid the rubble and grief, the MSC's stand firm, not merely as responders, but as bearers of Christ's healing presence. Our parishes in Mainland Cebu and Camotes Islands, though damaged, have become sanctuaries of hope. Together with our lay partners, we have mobilised waves of relief, prayer, and accompaniment.

On November 4, 2025, Typhoon Tino slammed into Central Visayas under Signal No. 4, with winds reaching 165 km/h. More than 700,000 people were displaced, over 90 lives were lost, and roads and communication lines were crippled. From earthquake to typhoon, it felt like a double-edged sword disaster striking from both ground and sky.

As we carry on with our third wave of relief efforts, even as Super Typhoon Uwan causes more destruction, we ask for your prayers. Pray for the families in grief. Pray for the farmers who have lost their crops. Pray for the children sleeping in shelters. And pray for us, your missionaries,

that we may never tire of being Christ's hands and feet in a broken world.

This is not merely humanitarian work; it is a mission. It is the living expression of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), a spirituality that sees Christ in the wounded earth and in every suffering face. As missionaries, we listen, discern, and act with love. However, this listening, discerning, and loving must not only begin after disaster strikes. It must be grounded in a prophetic awareness that many of these calamities are not solely natural; they are exacerbated by human abuse and neglect of creation. Deforestation, irresponsible development, pollution, and the exploitation of natural resources have made our communities more vulnerable to the very disasters we now respond to. Environmental justice, therefore, is not an optional concern; it is a Gospel imperative. Our mission must include the defence of our common home, standing in solidarity with creation and with the poor who suffer first and most. Only then can our response be truly redemptive, not just reactive.

Let us remain faithful to our call: to love without limits, to serve without fear, and to hope without ceasing.

In corde Jesu,

News and Updates:  
The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart  
Philippine Province





# *The first five years in ministry*

News from Indonesia

The ongoing formation for the first five years in ministry took place at Taro Anggro MSC Spirituality Centre in Wonosobo, Central Java. The MSC retreat house is located in the highlands. It is very cold and humid, with temperatures reaching 16 °C overnight. The participants, 15 young MSC, are in their fourth and fifth years of ministry after completing initial formation.

The first day was full of excitement because most of them came from very remote areas of Indonesia. Fr. Matthias Batvian MSC, one of the participants, said, "When I received the invitation to take part in an ongoing formation program (OGF) under five years in ministry, my heart was pumping. I was very happy because I will have the opportunity to reflect on my experiences and share them with my fellow young MSC. On the other hand, I have the responsibility to take care of my parish. It is not easy to leave the ministry for one month for ongoing formation."

In the first week, I introduced "contemplative listening". We then had time to reflect on and share our experiences: the joys and hopes, the grief and anxieties, the difficulties and excitements. We shared in a safe and supportive atmosphere. Each of us had plenty of time to share and be listened to. This first week was very relieving. We felt our missionary identity and were proud of it.

In the second week, we reflect on our vow of chastity. When I created the questionnaire to identify relevant themes, living with the vow of chastity was the first to come up. Fr. Ardi Watuseke MSC, the facilitator, did not speak much about sexuality. Instead, he discussed how we, as young MSC, live with the vow of chastity in a modern se-

cular world. He encouraged fellow MSC to strengthen their spiritual lives. After a break, we continued our process with safeguarding training. Fr. Julius Sodah MSC explained why we must take safeguarding seriously in the modern world.

In the third week, we learned about the framework of the spirituality of the heart: encounters, intimacy, conversion, and mission. We did not only learn theoretically but also practised it in real life. The next day, we formed three groups. The first group visited a school for autistics run by Charity Brothers, the second group visited a Jesuit elderly home, and the third visited an MSC elderly house. This program was very interesting. For example, at the Jesuit elderly home, they were warmly welcomed and able to share their experiences as religious. The encounter with this experience was very touching and inspired them to live in the spirit of openness, constant prayer, and discernment. They also realised the importance of a good and supportive community. After completing the day of visits, we reflected on the experiences through the four steps: encounter, intimacy, conversion, and mission. Human maturity is the next module. The facilitators were psychologists who helped us achieve maturity as young adults.

The fourth week was the busiest period. Fr. Aris Fenalampir MSC explained how to study our MSC constitution and statutes systematically to draw inspiration from them. Then Fr. Stephanus Sumpono MSC helped us reflect on the integrity of creation. The process was very interesting because MSC bought bare land and planted several trees to restore the ecosystem. Lastly, I facilitated a goal-setting scheme for them, focusing on managing life to develop the six aspects of MSC formation: human and development, spiritual, intellectual, pastoral, community, and MSC life.

When we finish the program and return to the ministry, we feel the joy of being MSC. We are not alone; we journey together as missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

**Petrus Suroto, MSC**  
Coordinator of OGF for the Indonesian Province

# Pastoral Supervision

## Supporting Healthy and Sustainable Ministry

One of the initiatives of the Ongoing Formation Commission is the potential creation of a professional training course in Pastoral Supervision. Guided by Commission members Tony Nolan MSC and Wendy Bignell, this project aims to develop a culturally suitable supervision framework aligned with the charism of the Heart. It combines professional development, psychological insights, and contemporary thinking within the broader helping professions.

Tony and Wendy hope this course will attract members of the Chevalier Family involved in various forms of pastoral ministry, especially those aiming to enhance their skills in this vital area of ministry support and accountability. At its core, pastoral supervision is a structured and reflective space where individuals—supported by a trained supervisor—can explore the more challenging aspects of ministry today. Supervision fosters the systemic well-being of practitioners, those they care for, and the wider community they serve. When ministers are supported, grounded, and resilient, their communities experience safer, more compassionate, and more sustainable pastoral care.

### What Happens in Supervision?

Supervision is more than just a conversation. It is a deeply reflective process that provides support, insight, and opportunities for transformational learning. The focus of the discussion is on the supervisee, their ministry context, and their daily tasks. Through this process, practitioners can gain greater self-awareness, recognise patterns in their ministry, clarify boundaries, enhance professional skills, and explore new ways of responding to complex situations.

Supervision is more than just reflecting on one's work. It also offers an essential support system and a key safeguard against potential burnout. It is different from both therapy and spiritual direction. While those disciplines aim at personal healing or spiritual discernment, supervision concentrates on ministry practice, professional growth, and the development of the practitioner as a pastoral minister.

Supervision is therefore not about micromanagement, nor is it an avenue for counselling. Instead, it is a welcoming space where ministers can step back, explore the challenges they face, and find innovative ways to approach their work with renewed energy and clarity.

### Why Supervision Matters Today

The world of ministry has become far more complex than in past generations. Those engaged in pastoral work often encounter unfamiliar challenges, ethical complexities, and heightened expectations. These pressures can create significant stress for those already feeling stretched thin. While supervision cannot remove these challenges, it can provide a reflective space to explore new responses, reduce stress, and protect against burnout. It supports positive mental health by offering a trusted relationship with someone who wants the supervisee to flourish—someone attentive to both skills development and personal well-being.

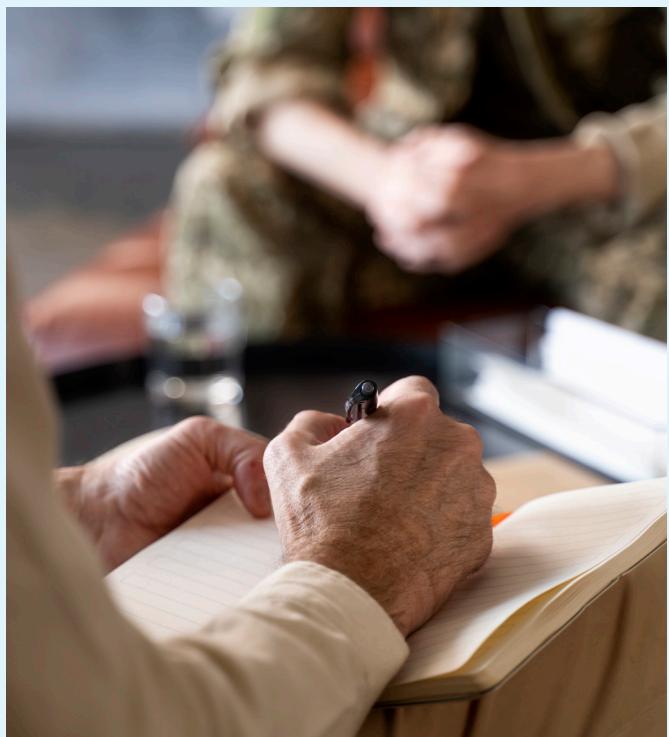
We warmly encourage all those engaged in pastoral ministry to consider how supervision might sustain and enrich their work.

For further information, please visit the Pastoral Supervision page on the Ongoing Formation website: <https://ongoing-formation.msc-chevalier.org/pastoral-supervision/>

Or contact Wendy Bignell  
[bignell.in.essence@gmail.com](mailto:bignell.in.essence@gmail.com)

If you are already a supervisor, we would love to hear from you. Consider adding your details to the Ongoing Formation Commission's supervisor database to help strengthen our growing network of skilled support: <https://ongoing-formation.msc-chevalier.org/pastoral-supervision/>

Wendy Bignell (Australia)



# Anchored in Hope

## Harvest from the Chevalier Family's 2025 Congress

The 2025 Congress left us with a precious harvest. On the evening of Friday, 17 October, the prayer was prepared by the academic community of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and involved everyone in an atmosphere where Charism, Spirituality and Mission were intertwined at every moment. The significant presence of lay people and the proximity of the canonization of Peter To Rot, which took place two days later in Rome, made that night even more special. In silence and music, simple and profound requests resounded: that Jesus never let us walk alone, that He teach us to live in His presence, that our hearts belong totally to Him, and that the Holy Cross always be our joy.

Saturday, 18 October, began with a community breakfast in the recreational area of the NSSC College. Then, the proposal for coexistence and the methodology that would guide the Congress were presented. Then, led by

Fr. Alex, we entered into a moment of study and learning about compassion and self-compassion. He showed us that compassion is born when we look at others with fraternity, allow ourselves to be moved by their frailties, and approach them with solidarity. The scene of Jesus with the widow of Nain, in Luke 7, revealed how compassion springs from the depths of our being, as a natural impulse of those who love without being bound by the judgement of the law. We discovered that if compassion is not exercised, it atrophies.

In this same inner movement, we were invited to look at ourselves. Self-compassion brings me closer to my own pain, generating the need to care for and recognise myself. It teaches us to care for ourselves with the same tenderness we offer to others. It does not isolate or produce self-pity, but strengthens self-esteem and inner freedom. Jesus teaches his disciples to withdraw to take care of themselves, Mark 6:31; to know how to dialogue with themselves in the challenges of life, according to Luke 4:1-13; he teaches not to run away from oneself, according to Luke 22:39-44; he announces the new commandment by remembering himself, see Matthew 22:39. He gave everything to humanity because he gave himself. We learn that we can be our own best friends or our worst enemies, and that spiritual maturity involves humbly including ourselves in our care.

In the afternoon, we return to the Word, delving deeper into Hebrews 6:19-20a: 'Hope is like an anchor for our life. It is secure and firm, penetrating to the other side of the curtain of the sanctuary, where Jesus entered for us as a forerunner.' Written by an unknown author of the second Christian generation around the 80s, it presents itself as a homily addressed to a community of Jewish converts who, in the face of persecution, suffering, and the delay in seeing final salvation, were in danger of losing their faith in Jesus as Saviour. They had difficulty accepting both the painful sacrifice of Christ and the suffering they themselves faced, remaining very attached to the cultic practices of the Old Testament. Hebrews reminds them that Jesus definitively overcomes the old institutions and shows the limits of the law: it is not legalism that saves or restores communion with God. Christ is not interested in the beauty of the temple or liturgical vestments, but in concrete life — in the sick, the excluded and the threatened — revealing that true worship is realised in mercy and dignity offered to those who suffer.

In the evening, despite the heavy rain, we held a procession through the streets of the neighbourhood with the





image of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and then we participated in the Solemn Mass in which the laity renewed their consecration.

Sunday, 19 October, was dedicated to the Chevalier Family Assembly, with the theme JPIC — Justice and Peace in the Integrity of Creation. The morning was lived with great participation, following the method of Community Wisdom: prayer, silence, reading, new silence and sharing in which everyone spoke and everyone listened, seeking to recognise what the Spirit was saying. The starting point for reflection: What actions could we develop within this JPIC theme, which is a commitment of the Congregations inspired by Father Jules Chevalier? Concrete and simple proposals emerged, born of the desire to integrate faith and life: offering showers on the street for homeless people to bathe, cultivating

organic community gardens, acting on behalf of poor children, encouraging food donations, recycling waste, reusing water, collecting empty medicine cartons and bottle caps.

In the final evaluation, the words reflected a profound inner movement. It was said that: 'I felt like I was being whipped in my way of life; I felt good; it is necessary to awaken new attitudes; to learn to change my way of thinking.' Many valued the learning, the welcome, the food, and the opportunity to better understand reality in order to act with greater clarity. The Community Wisdom method was recognised as a path that should continue to be lived in the different areas of mission. The Congress ended with an excellent lunch served on site.

*Text adapted from the harvest of  
Getúlio Saggin, MSC (Curitiba Province-Brazil)*

# ‘HÁGASE Group Music’ has been formed

The aim of ‘HÁGASE Group Music’ is not only to sing, but also to proclaim through music the love of God that transforms lives. They define themselves as ‘a family of faith’ and emerged from the Barcelona group of the youth movement ‘HÁGASE’.

This group of young friends has found a source of inspiration for their mission in the spirituality of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. ‘HÁGASE’ is not just a name, it is a vocational response, part of the project ‘Hágase. Life, as an MSC vocation’, a path to discovering that each person is called to something great.

“We believe that the world needs to know something very simple and profound: that God truly loves humanity, and that this love beats strongly in the Heart of Jesus,” they explained. Their music is born from this conviction: a real, close, present love. It is not nostalgia or distant devotion, but a faith that is lived and sung today.

With guitars, voices and a lot of heart, ‘HÁGASE Group Music’ was created to reach other young people, raise questions, sow hope and be a voice for God’s love. “If just one person listening to us feels that God is speaking to them, then it’s worth it,” they simply said.

More than a musical group, they are a community that prays, sings and walks together, convinced that the Gospel can also have rhythm, melody and harmony. And like ‘HÁGASE’, they want to make it sound.

**Gianluca Pitzolu, MSC (Spanish Province)**



## *iViva Cristo Rey!, the first musical album*

My name is Mateo Díaz, music producer of the album *iViva Cristo Rey!* by Hágase Group Music. I am very happy and grateful to have had the opportunity to create the music for this album, released on 6 November in honour of the Blessed Martyrs of Canet de Mar.

“Long live Christ the King!” were their words before going to the Father’s house, and this project is a tribute to their dedication, out of love for Christ and others.

Learning about their story deeply impressed me. Young men between the ages of 20 and 28, priests and coadjutor brothers, who, amid persecution, did not renounce God or their service to children and young people. In producing this album, I sought to open a space for prayer and contemplation, where their testimony resonates in our lives and inspires us to follow the Lord with courage. The music combines piano, strings, guitars and silence, evoking the fidelity and dedication of the martyrs. I am happy to collaborate with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and that this album can bring peace and admiration for the example of the martyrs. Thank you to everyone who made this project possible and, above all, to the Lord. May the cry “Long live Christ the King!” always resound in our lives.

**Mateo Díaz (Spain)**

## Foundation Day Celebration



**Antwerp, Belgium.** This year, it was a blessing that we could celebrate our Foundation Day over two days. On December 07, 2025, there was a celebration at St. Rochus Church in Brussels to mark the Foundation Day of MSC. Attendees included MSCs, the MSC fraternities of Antwerp and Brussels, and the Open Heart Movement (MSC laity), along with a full church of parishioners, all praying and singing. The African dinner afterwards was delicious. Our Family-band has been strengthened. AMETUR: May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere. On December 08, 2025, the Belgian MSCs gathered in Beringhout to celebrate Foundation Day. We shared a meaningful Holy Eucharist, followed by a meal together, and then took some time to catch up on the latest updates within the Belgian MSC Community. It was truly a very pleasant day!

Clement Sathish, MSC (Indian Province)

## Team Building of the General Leadership Team

The General Leadership Team (GLT) is in Salzburg from 1–6 December at the MSC Provincialate of the South Germany–Austria Province for their extended meeting and a team-building program facilitated by Frances Heery, aimed at strengthening collaboration, communication, and team spirit to improve their ministry to the congregation as one team. Through reflection, communal discernment, and shared moments, they continue to deepen unity and teamwork. Later, they went to Steinerskirchen for the annual retreat from 7–12 December.



## Open letter to Father Joaquín Herrera Bayón, MSC

Our minds and hearts still cannot fully comprehend that you are returning to Spain. Amidst the pain and uncertainty, but with the respect your discernment deserves, we recognize that the Lord has shown you, his will. Therefore, we want to express a few words that spring from our hearts and from the sincerest appreciation we have for you, the fruit of so many years shared between dreams, plans, strategies, struggles, and joys of the soul, united under the same name: Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is true that, on some issues of opinion or vision,

we did not always agree. However, the affection and appreciation never died. There were silences, yes, but the admiration never faded.

Today, the entire parish community—and anyone reading these lines—should know that we are experiencing a gray day, but also a bright one: a day of mixed feelings of sorrow and gratitude, of departure and hope. Life, as we well know, is that combination of emotions, of highs and lows, like the rhythms of the heart and the pages of history. We know that a long and fruitful stage



of your missionary life is coming to an end, and that a new one is beginning, in the land where you were born and from where you left when you were so young, full of enthusiasm and dreams.

Today is Easter: there is death and there is life, there is farewell and there is hope.

And although you often avoid receiving praise, today it is your turn to hear it. Because we are in the presence of a man of flesh and blood, but also a witness of faith and consistency, and nothing we say is an exaggeration.

We bid farewell to the courageous missionary who one day decided to come to America when it was daring to do so; the one who ventured into the beloved and long-suffering Quiché, where the MSCs lovingly sowed the first seeds of the Gospel, leaving behind traces, projects, and even the blood of their best sons. You arrived with new vigor, with new energy, and with a renewed way of being Church. And since then, we have seen you act with conviction, intelligence, and deep spirituality. Today we tip our hats to the authentic missionary, the one who in everything he did knew he was sent, a witness, and a servant.

We also bid farewell to the respectful parish priest, the serious and organized man who treated everyone with dignity. To the priest who listened, guided, shared with young and old, who knew how to joke with simplicity and approach with humility. To the discreet man who broke the ice with a fraternal greeting and who found in a conversation about soccer a bridge to reach the heart.

Today we thank the formator and teacher who sowed in many of us deep convictions about consecrated missionary life. You formed us with your witness, with solidity and depth. Several generations of MSC bear your mark: you taught us to love the Congregation and to live coherently every day. That sowing has borne fruit, and there are still harvests to come.

We also bid farewell to the superior and provincial who, together with other brothers of great value, worked with vision and determination to consolidate our religious family in these lands. Your leadership was key in the transition from Pro-Province to Province, and your mark is on the solid structures that sustain us today. Your gifts of organization and vision for the future marked every responsibility you assumed. You wanted to ensure that we were well grounded, faithful to the dream of Jules Chevalier, that 30-year-old who in 1854 gave life to this small but passionate missionary family.

We cannot forget the key man in the Cause for Beatification of our MSC martyrs of Quiché and other companions. The Province and the Church of Guatemala will always be grateful to you for your tireless work. The thoroughness with which you prepared the documentation was admirable, and the corrections in Rome were minimal: a clear sign of your dedication and care. Thanks to you and many others, today we proudly celebrate the memory of our witnesses.

Finally, we say goodbye to our companion on the journey, the exemplary missionary who was never a cause for scandal, but rather for respect and gratitude. You are leaving, but you leave us an immense legacy: that of a consistent, hard-working, faithful, and deeply human man.

We will continue to assimilate your return to Spain with nostalgia, but also with hope. Perhaps deep down you will repeat that phrase from the Gospel: "We are useless servants; we have only done what we ought to have done."

And maybe you don't like receiving so many compliments—we know but we feel the need to tell you all this.

We wish you all the best in this new stage of your life. You are leaving, but your legacy remains.

You remain in our memory, in our hearts, in this city of eternal spring, and in every corner of the Casa de El Tesoro.

You are leaving... but you are staying.  
Farewell, brother.

Keep us in your prayers, as we will keep you in ours.

With fraternal affection,

**The MSC Provincial Superior of  
Central America – Mexico and his Council**

# Men With a Mission

Having been in Japan for almost three years, this is the first time I have participated in the annual retreat with the community. In previous years, I stayed behind because I was busy with Japanese classes at Nanzan University of the SVD. That said, this is actually my second annual retreat this year, since in July I returned to Vietnam to join the MSCs there for the Gifted and Blessed retreat as a member of the Australian Province.

This time, there were 15 of us, including Fr. Edwin, the Provincial of the MSC Philippines, who was visiting the two Filipino MSCs that had long been in Japan (Fr. Joey Mission and Fr. Rey Tibon).

The retreat venue was familiar to most of us. Many have come here annually for decades, long before I was born. It is one of the best places to view Mt. Fuji in Susono, Shizuoka Prefecture. Yet no matter how familiar it becomes, the breathtaking beauty of that sacred, iconic mountain never fades. Even though they say it may explode someday, perhaps that is the charm of eternity, ever alive, ever new.

Every day, two conferences were held by Fr. Bram: a more exploratory session in the morning and a more contemplative one in the afternoon. After our individual morning reflections, we gathered in small groups to share. In the afternoons, we celebrated Mass together, and at night, we concluded with Eucharistic adoration. For me, those quiet moments before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament were truly special.

A meaningful addition this year was the companionship of our recently canonised saint, Peter ToRot. Inspired and guided by his witness, we engaged in reflection and prayer on the theme: "MEN WITH A MISSION." It seems that each of us once responded with the same generous and trusting reply, "Here I am, Lord," just like the eager young Samuel. And from that first Yes, many more have followed. We have allowed God to guide us, planting us into His field, this land of Japan with its unique characteristics. Here, whether someone has been on mission for more than six decades or is as new as I am, we all walk the same path—the path of the seed that is sown into the earth and dies in order to bear fruit.

We are called to embrace the humility of a seed buried in deep soil, reflecting the mystery of Nazareth, the cost of silent martyrdom—silent but not shut off. Fragile seeds carry within them the spirituality of the heart and the light of hope. The life of St. Peter To Rot offers us great encouragement. He is the fruit of the MSC mission in Papua. Although the mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds, it has grown into a tree where the birds of the sky can rest. And that seed, even though it never saw the day the mustard plant reached the light, already partook in joy at the very moment it generously surrendered itself.

For each of us, the story of the seed and the path of mission is not about immediate visible results but a call to faithfulness. We must be faithful and strive to stay faithful until the end. Despite our fragility and weakness, we once again wish to answer as Peter did when the Lord asked: "Do you love me, more than these?" For it is the love of Christ that drives us.

Out there, in the distance, Mt. Fuji stood as always—beautiful and captivating, though sometimes hidden behind clouds. Yet the mountain endures, certain through the ages. And in that moment, I felt I understood something: God's faithfulness is far more beautiful and much more steadfast than that.

We ended the retreat with gratitude and hope by reciting our vows after Mass. We also formally made a missionary sending salute for Fr. Kenji. Although his trip to New Zealand will only last six months to support the Vietnamese MSCs in establishing and stabilising their new community, as a small community like Japan with limited personnel, sending one member out in this way is truly communal—and deeply meaningful. Ubique!

Le Dinh Vinh Toan, MSC (Vietnam)





## *Human love and divine love of the Sacred Heart*

We held a retreat at the St. Julie Billiart Formation House, owned by the SPM sisters in Lawang, East Java. There were 27 participants. Our retreat leader was Fr. Johny Astanto. The theme of the retreat was 'Human love and divine love of the Sacred Heart' (inspired by the encyclical *Dilexit Nos*).

**Day I.** Began with a short session to explore the context of our retreat, which was based on Pope Francis' encyclical *Dilexit Nos*. Starting from today's troubled world, Pope Francis reflected on this situation and what we need to do—namely, to understand the world and return to the heart as the core of life that has been lost.

**Day II. Return to the Heart.** We are encouraged to recognise the importance of the "heart" as the core of authentic life, decisions, and community. By understanding what touches the heart and where we stand. First, by examining and understanding the current world situation, which is described as a period of anxiety and superficiality. Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman refers to this as the "Liquid Society," marked by ongoing uncertainty, fluid identities, fragile social bonds, rapid changes, and unstable institutions.

All of this has given rise to the phenomenon of "strangers," the erosion of commitment and loyalty, relational consumerism, individualism and fragmentation within communities, and fear of change and irrelevance. Ultimately, this has led to a crisis of "heartlessness"/insensitivity, a lack of sensitivity of the heart.

This also impacts the lives of religious people, leading to a shallower sense of life and relationships, where living according to routine and working for targets become common. As a result: activism replaces genuine encounters, self-image takes the place of authenticity, and noise or busyness displaces silence. This kind of life divides our hearts and causes us to lose the inner unity that allows us to discern, love, and serve with sincerity.

Pope Francis emphasises the importance of returning to and embracing the Heart as the source of life, where we can find God and our true selves. We can learn from Scripture how to understand the meaning of the heart and rekindle our warmth. We are also invited to see the Heart of Christ as a unifying element: the human heart and the divine heart. The event of the Incarnation becomes the centre of reflection on the divine heart and the human heart. We are invited to renew ourselves by returning to the heart and rediscovering all that has been lost in the flow of time.

**Day III. School of the Heart.** On the third day, we observe the actions and words of divine Love as an expression of Jesus' Love. We are invited to learn from Jesus' human and divine gestures and actions, so that we may become more open and generous like the Heart of Jesus, embodying a spirit of kenosis. We unite our attitudes, joys, and sorrows from our lives of devotion and mission with the Heart of Jesus.

Gestures of love are God's active love, God's love that Love manifests in concrete actions that are both human and divine, with Love incarnate in the man Jesus—so close, touchable, tangible, and palpable. Through words and touch, Jesus expresses God's love that is so near. God is full of mercy and tenderness. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the synthesis of the entire Gospel, revealed through how He acts and what He says. This is evident in the power of touch, the gaze of recognition, and the inclusive embrace. Every time Jesus uses touch in tangible actions towards people seeking healing and freedom, He also offers an unconditional and affirming gaze—dignifying, inviting change, and calling people. The Heart of Jesus welcomes everyone and embraces all with unconditional love. The challenge is how we translate the gestures of God's Heart into our daily lives with

1. Liturgical touch: when we bless, lay hands, give absolution, we are the hands of God.

2. Pastoral gaze: learning to encounter those entrusted to us, going beyond administrative tasks and routine greetings, caring for them.
3. Ministry of closeness: go to the margins and touch those who are poor, weak, and powerless.

We are also invited to use the language of the heart by:

- Preaching with empathy: how we preach, give advice, and speak in our daily lives
- Becoming trusted friends, by building inner silence and intimacy with Jesus
- Encouraging and strengthening: recognizing the goodness and potential of others.

Living from a pierced heart with:

- A spirit of sacrifice and self-emptying
- Practising active love
- Being a source of life

**Day IV. Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus: a profound expression of the Church's identity and mission.** We are invited to draw from the missionary spirit of the Heart of Jesus by being ready to be sent as the Heart of Jesus in the world, expressed through personal commitment.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart is very relevant because it reveals the core of Christian identity, which is to live and love from the Heart of Christ.

Additionally, we are called to make reparation with a renewed purpose: to build a civilization of love alongside Christ that confronts the structures of sin, heals relationships, and restores bonds of brotherhood. We offer ourselves to His merciful Love and become a mission by proclaiming God's Love to the world.

We are also encouraged to renew our lives and ministry by deepening our prayer intimacy with Him, entering the sacred space within ourselves to unite with the heartbeat of God's Heart, and to discover our calling and the fire of our mission.

**Day V. Compassio Mission.** Beginning with a profound experience of God's love found in the Heart of Jesus, we come to believe that God is Love. This belief motivates us to proclaim God's love to the world so that others may come to know it. Our lives serve as a continuous witness to God's love as we share that love among our brothers and sisters.

We are called to carry out the Compassio Mission for the world, to pray and to motivate ourselves to face the challenges confronting humanity and the Church's mission, allowing ourselves to be drawn into a culture of encounter, because we are always united with the Heart of Jesus and strive to make our hearts like His Heart as Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

We are invited to see with new eyes, namely the eyes of Jesus, with a heart full of love and tenderness, without being swept away by the atmosphere, which comes from the joyful event of the Resurrection.

The Compassio Mission embodies God's essence and His complete surrender, demonstrated through giving up His only Son in unity with the Holy Spirit.

During this retreat, we are encouraged to engage in personal reflection and communal discernment, as well as to share in groups. We also have the chance for personal renewal and reconciliation or repentance, restoring our personal commitment. **Dwi Rahadi (Indonesian Province)**

## Building a Wise and Happy Community

17 MSC Confreres Enter into Silence in Taroanggro, Kapencar – East Wonosobo

A total of 17 confreres from the MSC (Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus) Provincialate and Mother House Community in Jakarta attended an intensive annual retreat from 10 to 15 November 2025, at the MSC Spirituality Centre, Taroanggro, East Wonosobo, Central Java. With the theme, "Building a Wise and Happy Community," the retreat was an important time for reflecting on the call to community life and mission, away from the busy city.

**Leaving Early, Arriving at Dusk.** The group, consisting of 12 confreres from the Provincialate and Mother House, departed from Jakarta on 9 November 2025 at 07:00, including 2 confreres from the Purworejo Prayer House for the Elderly and 3 confreres from the Karanganyar Novitiate, and arrived at the location managed

by Br. Kamto, Fr. Stef Sumpana, and Mgr. Nico Adiseputra that afternoon.

The retreat was specifically accompanied by Br. Petrus Anjar Trihartono FIC, Director of the Roncalli Retreat House, Salatiga.

**Absolute Silence as the Key to Reflection.** On the first day, Monday (10/11), activities began with an Opening Mass led by the Community Leader, Fr. Yohanes Emmanuel K. Toby MSC. In his introduction, Fr. Toby invited the participants to use this opportunity for gratitude, contemplation, and reflection on their mission work as one community.

Quoting the Holy Scripture reading, Fr. Elton highlighted two key aspects of gaining wisdom: first, dedicating



time for personal, quiet reflection, and second, deepening one's knowledge of Christ.

"In Our Congregation, there are no newcomers or strangers," this quote from the Founder became the initial reference point for the participants, as conveyed in the retreat introduction session. The participants were then invited to see, listen, and do the will of Jesus as the foundation of community life.

Throughout the retreat, the participants agreed to practice silentium magnum (total silence), a state endorsed by Br. Anjar in the first session as a time to 'relax, reflect, refresh, recharge, and be reborn'—briefly withdrawing to draw closer to God and to one another.

#### **Greeting the Sun at the Foot of Sumbing-Sindoro.**

Amid the intensity of the retreat's contemplation sessions, the retreat committee introduced a special activity called "Laudato Si Walk." This activity was included on the agenda for the second and third days of the retreat at the MSC Spirituality Center, Kapencar, East Wonosobo. Taking inspiration from Pope Francis' encyclical on caring for our common home, the participants began their activities at 05:00 AM.

The "Laudato Si' Walk" is a combination of exercise, healthy walking, and contemplation. Participants walked around the Kapencar area, breathing in the fresh morning air while gazing at the beautiful valley nestled between Mount Sumbing and Mount Sindoro.

This activity was not only about physical health but also a spiritual reflection on nature as a gift from God.

**Fraternal Visit in Kapencar.** On the third day of the retreat, the "Laudato Si" Walk activity was expanded with a warm fraternal visit. While exercising in the morning, the confreres had the opportunity to visit their colleagues who are serving at St. Fillipus Parish, Kapencar, namely Fr. Leo Sugiono and Fr. Paul Ngalgola.

In addition to visiting fellow confreres, the group also paid a fraternal visit to the PBHK Sisters working in the area. This visit reaffirmed the spirit of communio (unity) and support among members of the congregation and other religious orders in the mission field.

This special activity effectively combined the need for physical fitness, appreciation for creation, and the building of fraternal bonds within the calm and reflective setting of the retreat.

**Thoroughly Examining the Foundation of Community.** On the second and third days, the retreat activities centred on the qualities of an ideal Christian community. Br. Anjar encouraged participants to reflect on the core principles of community: mutual giving and receiving in love, and the importance of trust.

The core of the reflection emphasised values that must be struggled for: caring, sharing, bearing (carrying burdens together), submitting (surrendering), and serving, all modelled after the person of Jesus.

The peak of interpersonal contemplation occurred during the group sharing sessions. Participants used the method of three rounds of spiritual conversation to discover communal wisdom—shared wisdom—that strengthened and comforted one another.

**Confronting Imperfection.** Entering the fourth day, Thursday (13/11), the retreat's focus shifted to the reality of human fallibility. The religious community was acknowledged as "a group of pilgrims" who are still imperfect.

Br. Anjar clearly reminded participants of the 15 ailments identified by Pope Francis that can harm communities, such as arrogance, gossip, and existential schizophrenia. Recognising these weaknesses provided an opportunity for all attendees to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession), followed by an Evening of Contemplation and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

**New Commitment and Ongoing Mission.** Friday (14/11) was the Sending Forth session, inviting participants to carry spiritual provisions to continue their journey of building a wise and happy community life.

"The invitation to remain in Jesus as the Vine is the strength in community life," was the essence of the sending message.

The retreat ended with a Closing Mass led by Fr. Ignatius Wong Sani Saliwardaya MSC. In his homily, Fr. Sani encouraged the community to discard the old ways of life and to develop a sincere commitment to embody the relationship between consecratio (consecrated life), communio (community), and missio (mission).

After the retreat, the confreres took the time for a communal recreation trip to Moby Paralayang Wonosobo and enjoyed the natural beauty of Dieng. The journey home also included a brief visit to the MSC confreres at St. Paul's Parish Wonosobo and attending the Funeral Mass of the mother of Fr. Sigit Rianto MSC in Purwokerto, before finally arriving back in Jakarta on Sunday (16/11) evening.

**Sisko Alexander, MSC (Indonesian Province)**

# PROFESSIONS AND ORDINATIONS (October-December 2025)

## PERPETUAL VOWS

| Name                           | Entity            | Date       |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Gianluca Pitzolu               | Spain             | 17.10.2025 |
| Mateus Henrique Costa Da Silva | Curitiba (Brazil) | 22-10-2025 |
| Yordy Henrique Costa Da Silva  | Ireland           | 22-10-2025 |

## DIACONATE ORDINATION

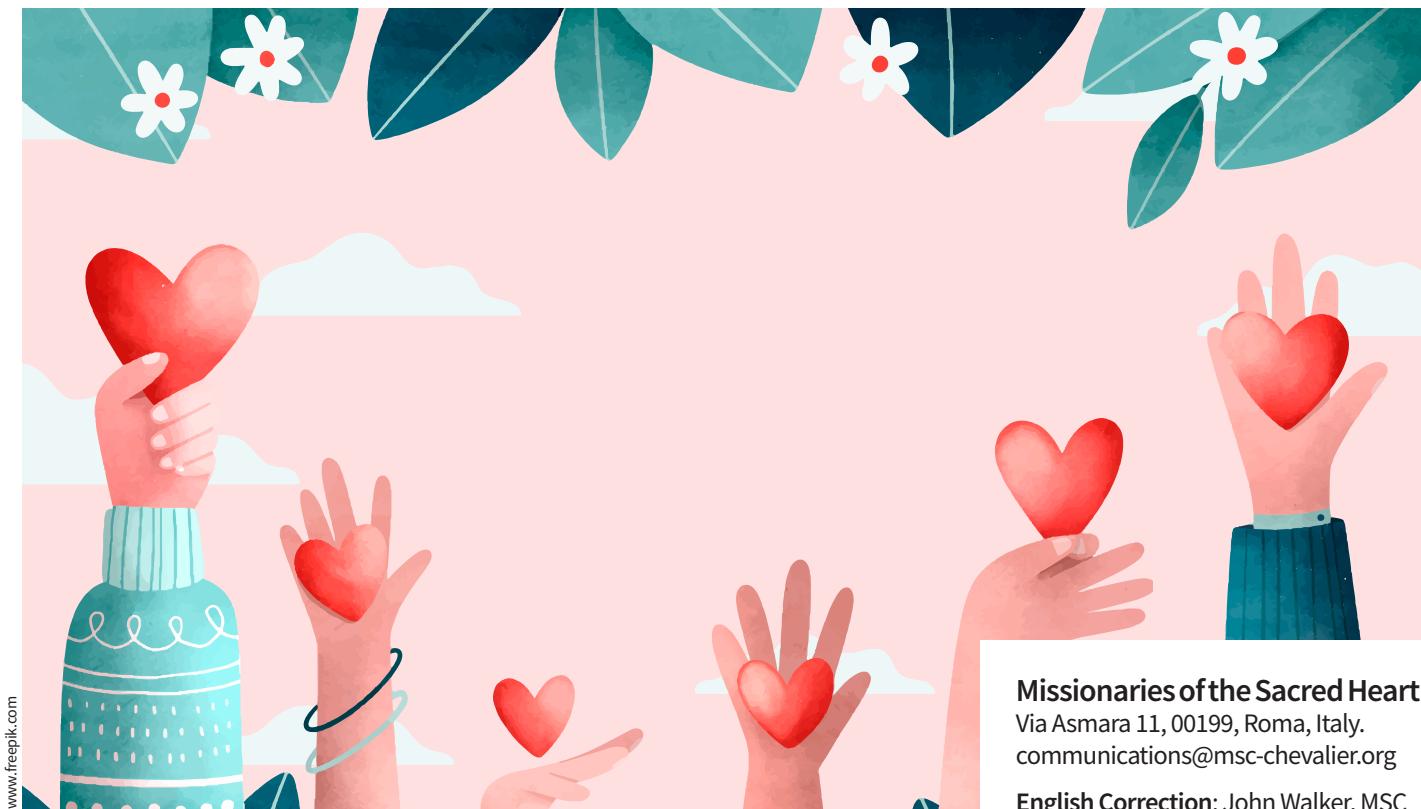
| Name             | Entity | Date       |
|------------------|--------|------------|
| Gianluca Pitzolu | Spain  | 18.10.2025 |

## PRIESTHOOD ORDINATION

| Name                          | Entity    | Date       |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Thanh Van LE, Vu Thanh Nguyen | Australia | 14.10.2025 |

## NECROLOGIUM (Deceased members from October-December 2025)

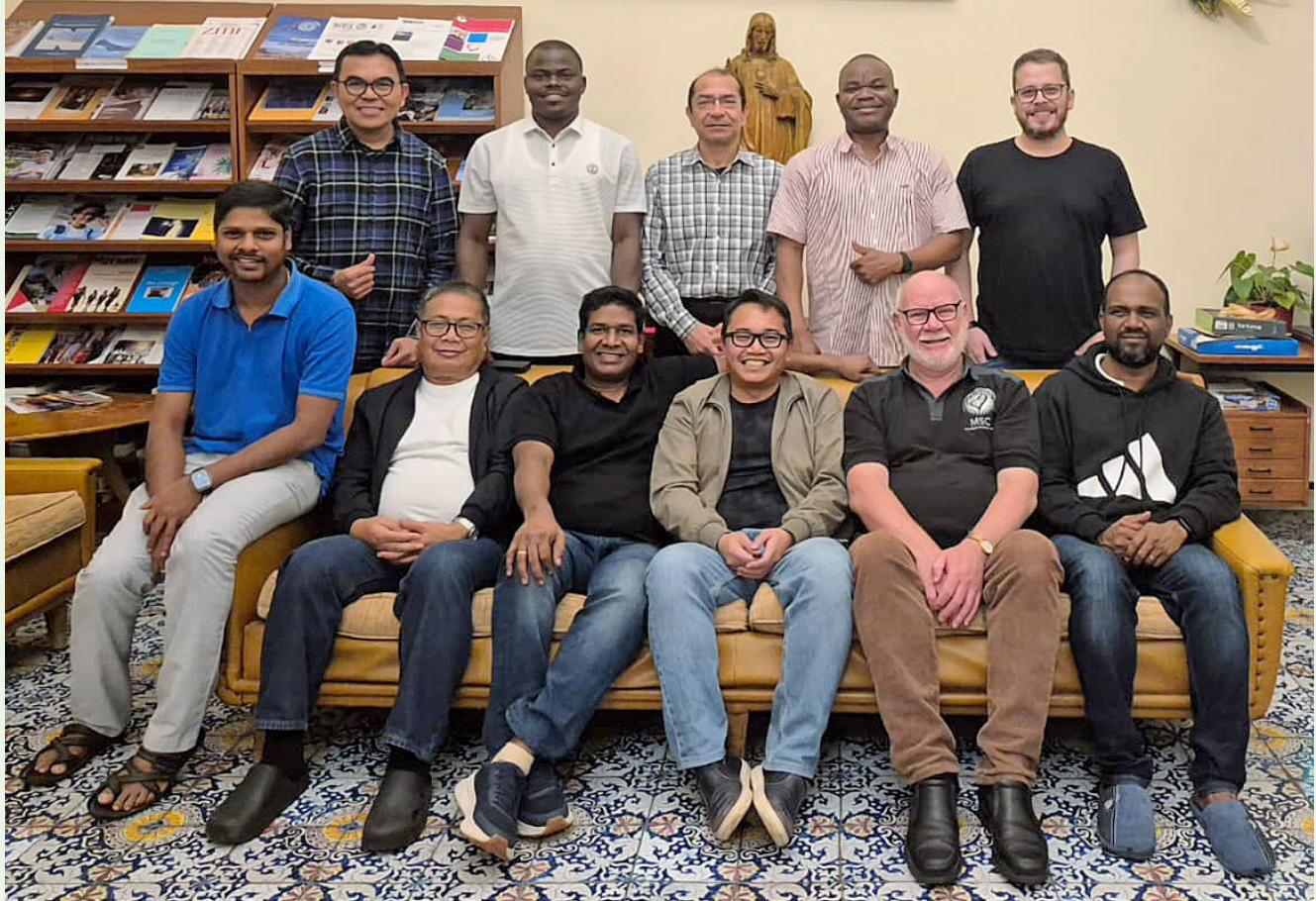
| Name                               | Province                | Date       |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Johanes Risse                      | North Germany           | 19.09.2025 |
| Jesús Lada Tuñón                   | Spain                   | 02.10.2025 |
| Michael Francis Reis               | Australia               | 24.10.2025 |
| Johannes Joaquim Maria van Leeuwen | Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) | 15.11.2025 |
| John Willio                        | Papua New Guinea        | 20.11.2025 |
| Thomas Burns                       | USA                     | 23.11.2025 |



**Missionaries of the Sacred Heart**  
Via Asmara 11, 00199, Roma, Italy.  
communications@msc-chevalier.org  
**English Correction:** John Walker, MSC



Missionaries of  
the Sacred Heart



*Merry  
Christmas  
and Happy  
New Year  
2026*

**May the Joy of  
Christmas inspire us  
to carry God's love  
to every heart we  
serve, today and in  
the coming year.**

*Christmas and New Year greetings  
from General Administration*