



# Interconnections

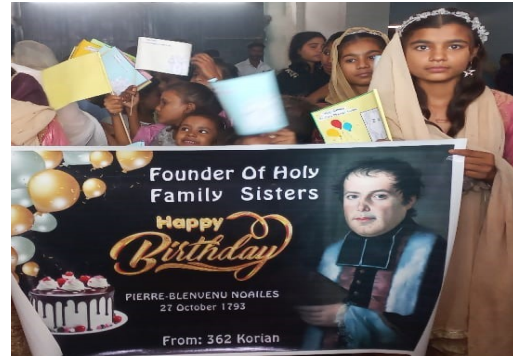
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Sr. Mamphetell Clementine Sekantsi prepares food for those in need in Pietermaritzburg



*‘The Synodal Journey  
invites us to safeguard the web of life’*

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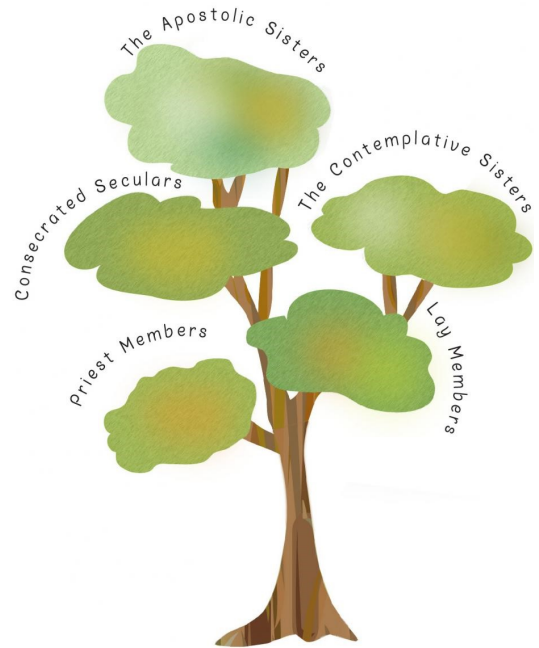
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"We the pilgrim people of God on earth and heirs of the Charismatic gift of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, make the dream of our Founder come true with our lives, being a **"tree of encounter"** for the whole human family wherever we find ourselves."

*(Meeting Point 7)*



### EDITORS :

Mercy Rani Jebamalai  
Rubeni Pejerrey  
Luis Jesus Garcia Lomas  
Annie Anthonipillai  
Angela Molapo  
Shiyamala Edonlmous  
Geni Dos Santos

### TRANSLATORS :

Eithne Hughes (London)  
Marie Carmen Leach (Spain)  
Claudine Gayongo (Rome)

**WEBSITE :** <http://www.saintefamillebordeaux.org/>

**FACEBOOK:** Sainte-Famille Bordeaux

**YOUTUBE:** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBa2x1ncfYtTiFUasEoseSg>

The Synodal journey calls for...

Since Pope Francis invited the Universal Church to reflect on synodality, we speak a lot about this topic, and have now become familiar with the term. Synodality invites us to walk together in communion, participation, and mission. The Council of the Family, which was held in France in 2023, highlighted the topic by drawing our attention to the life of our Founder and his synodal journey. Already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, PBN set the Family on a synodal path, whereas the Church is focusing on synodality now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our Holy Family tree is a synodal dream where all vocations come together as one Family - Apostolic, Contemplatives, Consecrated Seculars, Lay Associates, Priest Associates, Youth, and Children - to walk together in spite of our differences, cultures, and languages. There is a place for everyone in the Family of PBN to journey together for mission.

***“Walking together into the third millennium as a synodal church, as Pope Francis says, is the essence of our being and of our mission as a charismatic family. The charism that God gave to our Founder, Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, is***

***more relevant than ever, and we have the co-responsibility to offer it to the Church and to the world.”*** (Meeting Point 7).



One of our priorities in Meeting Point 7 invites the whole Family ***“to live the synodal dimension of our Charism, as members of the PBN Family, in order to participate in God's mission.”*** The synodal journey aims at listening, acceptance, collaboration, communion, journeying together, and care of creation in and around us, so one of the essential elements consists of working to safeguard the web of life.

As we begin the new liturgical year in the season of Advent, the synodal journey invites us to walk in Hope, Joy, Love, and Peace as a pilgrim people to safeguard the web of creation in a synodal way. May our Good Father guide every step during this season, so that together, we welcome the Babe of Bethlehem in our hearts.

Mercy Rani JEBAMALAI

HERE IN ROME

GENERALATE

**GOOD BYE:** Sr. Maria de Lourdes De La Fuente has served in the General House for 30 years. Now, it's time for her to return to Spain, that will be in December 2024. As a member of the Generalate Community, she contributed a lot with the quality of her gentle presence, in different services, including as a Community Superior, and as a nurse always available to everyone. She has also served as a member of the International Information Team... As a Secretary, she has been working as Spanish and French reference secretary, offering also her skills to communicate in Italian. We are grateful to her for all that she has done for the welfare of our Big Family. **Thank you, Lourdes!!!** We accompany you in our prayers for your new insertion and ministry.



**WELCOME:**

Sr. Christine Fene - Fene from the Unit of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has joined us to serve as a secretary. A warm welcome to the Generalate community. We wish her a fruitful experience as she integrates herself into a multicultural community and many blessings for her ongoing journey.





## 'CARING FOR EACH OTHER AND FOR THE EARTH'

This theme brought together 26 people for 4 days in September, as part of the Journey of Hope organised by a **Spiritual Leadership Team from Caritas France**. Most of the participants were people in precarious situations, from different cultures and religions, some of whom were involved in caring for shared gardens. An initial preparation-day enabled the participants to get to know each other, express their expectations and share their talents.

The Director of the place where we stayed, Paulo, is originally from Brazil, and was born in the Amazon. The aim of the house is to **'take care' of people in every aspect of their life, and to 'take care' of the earth, our common home**. Particular attention is paid to children, young people and the vulnerable. It values hospitality, training, spirituality and ecology. Each day, the participants met in small groups called 'fraternities' where they listened attentively, maintained confidentiality and respected each other's views. During the first fraternity gathering, each participant was invited to choose, from a list, two words that best represented fraternity for them and to say why. The following day,

a time of prayer was offered in the open air for those who wished to do so, and we welcomed the day in praise of the Creator by turning towards the 4 points of the compass. Then we listened to Paulo, a child of the Amazonian forest, as he shared his approach to Mother Earth and the link



between humans and nature. We then visited the garden, cultivated according to the permaculture principle, the educational beehive, the spice garden and the park, where even the passage of ants going back and forth across a path is indicated by a small sign so as not to crush them!

We were then able to watch a video explaining the principle of permaculture, the vital role of earthworms, those invisible

and rather despised little creatures, the complementary nature of plants... The day's time of fellowship invited the participants to reflect on the question: What links can we make between this way of cultivating the earth and the way we live our fellowship?

The following day, after **watching a video of the Good Samaritan**, two questions led to rich sharing:

☞ *When did I find myself in a situation where I needed help? Who came to me? What happened?*

☞ *When did I give my help? to whom? What happened?*

Three months later, a debriefing allowed us to see the fruits of this journey. Patrick told us: 'Before, I was closed in on myself, in the shared garden I only looked after my own seeds. The Journey of Hope opened a door for me and gave me self-confidence. I felt listened to without judgement. Now I can communicate more easily.'

**Anne-Marie  
Lay Associate, France**

## GATHERING OF LAY ASSOCIATES IN IRELAND

Newbridge Parish Centre has become the venue for the annual meeting of the Holy Family Lay Associates in Ireland. This year it was held on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September and brought together over 40 people representing for the most part the eight Lay Associate groups in Ireland, some Sisters from the five Irish Communities, and three students from the Holy Family Secondary School who are members of the HF Youth group. A special visitor from England was Maureen Bowsley (President of the B&I Lay Members).



The day began with Mass at 9:30 am in the Parish Church. At the beginning of Mass, Edel Mulligan, leader of one of the three Newbridge groups, welcomed everyone and spoke briefly to the congregation about the *Holy Family Charism*.

After Mass, all those attending the gathering moved to the Parish Centre where Sr. Margaret Bradley welcomed all warmly, with a special welcome for Maureen, and outlined the programme for the day. Given that it was the Season of Creation, it was appropriate that the day was broadly centred on this through input, contributions from participants, and commitments.

The keynote speaker was Jane Mellet, the Church Outreach Manager in Trócaire, the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland. She had previously been the **Laudato Si' Officer for Trócaire**. Her presentation, brilliantly illustrated by means of slides, was entitled: *The Gospel of Creation - Cultivating a Spirituality of Ecology*.

It was a powerful, deeply moving, challenging call to Eco-Conversion that resonated with all. There were times for pause throughout, to reflect and contemplate in silence. It was an implicit call to action in favour of our common home. A second slide show, later in the day, was quite explicit when Jane gave ten Top Tips on how this might be done.

### Commitments

It was also a time for different commitments. Celine, Justino and Anne, three women who are very involved in Parish ministry and wanting to deepen their relationship with God, had been attending meetings of the Lay Members and studying the *Way of Life*. They felt ready to make

their commitment within the PBN Family. Sr. Margaret invited them to come forward with Maureen Bowsley, who, with Sr. Áine, had prepared a text for the Service of Commitment. Celine, Justino and Ann expressed in their own words what they were committing themselves to, and why. It was a moment of great joy and meaning for all present and an opportunity for them to renew their own commitment in silence.

Then Edel Mulligan took the floor to announce that Maureen, who had agreed to be President for Britain & Ireland for two years, was handing the reins over to Terri Coonan, an Irish Committee member and LM Group Leader. Maureen was thanked and applauded for her dedicated service. Terri promised to commit herself to her new role to the best of her ability asking for the support and prayer of all present.

The final part of the day's programme was described as **REACH-OUT**. The enthusiasm in the room had to be challenged into action. All prayed Pope Francis's Prayer for Creation.

Then, again using meaningful slides, Jane outlined the ten **Top Tips**, indicating ways of working together to bring about climate change. Ideas from Lay Members were read aloud and printed copies of these left out. All were invited to sign up for any of the activities suggested. There were many hand-outs on offer: prayer cards, from Jane and H.F., booklets, Info sheets, arm bands for peace and justice, envelopes with all kinds of seeds for the sowing, boxes of Wildflower seeds, and an abundance of coloured wool for charity knitters.

The response was indeed heartening, causing Jane to remark as she left, *"There's so much energy in this group!"* It was a great day in so many ways. One couldn't but come away hopeful for the time ahead and filled with gratitude for all those who had contributed in any way to make the day an occasion to be remembered.



## RETHINKING FOR MISSION

As women committed to mission, we remain perpetual disciples of Jesus, called to listen to God's call through the realities of the moment and the context.

This call from God, which is renewed every day, impels us to know how to constantly rethink of our mission, in order to discover the calls of the moment and the context, and to respond to them with dynamism and enthusiasm, hence the place of Ongoing Formation in the life of every person following Christ.

This is why I left Rome for Dublin/Ireland, where I spent a few weeks with our Sisters in that part of the world. The main objective was to spend some time in an English-speaking community, with a view to developing my ability to speak and understand the English language.

I had the chance to visit the 4 Holy Family communities (Dublin, Newbridge, Clane and Sonas Christ) and spend time with our Sisters and those with whom they interact. I'd say I received more than I expected. The elderly Sisters I met helped me, not just to enrich my English, but to rethink my life based on their personal and community lives.

Yes, **'The community is a place that must help us to think'** (cfr. Ana Maria, opening address - EGC 2024): Thinking about God, thinking about others, thinking about



mission, thinking about the world, thinking about the future...



I experienced that the life, vision and commitment of our Sisters, the organisation of the communities and all their activities, a **'journey together'** was always oriented towards helping each one to live as fully as possible her relationship with God and others, and to be connected with her biological family, her religious family, the Church and all of creation.

The liturgy is very well prepared and adapted (Masses via streaming, rosary together...), the houses well cared for with a rhythm that allows each person to live mission in a fulfilled and serene way, according to who she is and what she is capable of. The message of St Paul in Romans 15:1-13 **'... we who are strong must bear the infirmities of the weak, and not please ourselves...'**, in connection with article 114 of our Constitutions, is well taken into account, especially with regard to our sick and elderly Sisters, and to those who work with them or live alongside them.

Each one seeks to make life easier for the other and for the whole.

As the majority of the Sisters no longer have external apostolates, the experience of mission is more centred on **RELATIONS = COMMUNION** in and around the community. A relational life impregnated with kindness, respect, affection, humour, attention, sensitivity, mutual aid and the concern to be and to make family through a smile, a word, a gesture, a service, a look, a word of encouragement or wonder, etc.

This has strengthened my conviction that, as a Sister of the Holy Family, my mission is to live and work for communion, based on the common mission and not the work I do: everything I learn, do, live, big or small, visible or invisible to others, is for the mission of Christ, the mission common to all. **NOTHING CAN PREVENT ME FROM ACCOMPLISHING THIS MISSION:** not

my state of health, not my age, not my context, not the realities of life, and least of all not the other person, because in each circumstance and according to what I am and what I have, I can find the right way to communicate Christ and His mission of being and creating Family.

I was amazed to see all our Sisters, and even those who work with them, beaming with joy, life and enthusiasm. On their feet, bed or wheelchair-bound, each one seemed attentive to what was going on

around her, ready to offer a smile, to stretch out her hand to reach out to the other, to say hello, to make the effort to say something...

The Sisters are full of energy, if not physical, then spiritual and relational. A great force, challenging us to unity. As well as the Holy Family context, I was in admiration at the beauty of this country and the generosity and kindness of the people. This has awakened my awareness of the care I have to give to our Sister Nature as a common good and in

interpersonal relations without partiality.

I remain grateful to **Sister Ana Maria and her Council, to Sister Catherine LAVERY and her Council, to all my Sisters in the Britain and Ireland Unit, to Claire and Carmel** in particular, for having offered me this opportunity to have a very rich and edifying experience, which has filled me with new strength for the mission, renewing my joy at belonging to the PBN Family and giving more of myself for its life.

**Sr. Claudine GAYONGO**  
Generalate Local Community, Rome

## ANGER AND INDIGNATION: EMBRACE AND SOLIDARITY

On the fatal day of **29 October 2024 when the terrible floods inundated more than seventy villages in the Province of Valencia**, the members of the Holy Family of Bordeaux (Apostolic Sisters and Lay Associates) in the Valencian Community were not seriously affected, because where they live the devastating effects of the storm did not reach them. However, as they testify, this is not the case around them, where the brutal magnitude of the catastrophe reigns: 'We have friends and colleagues at school who have been badly affected, with material losses; we are experiencing a tragedy: we can only pray for all the families affected, because it is a disaster'.

Boots on the ground, in the wave of solidarity (prayer, collaboration with Caritas, volunteering...), help was not long in coming by land, sea and air, in the face of the ravages of Storm DANA, which brought frustra-

tion and deep sadness of heart: collapsed houses and flooded fields; frustration and anger at seeing 'people dead in the mud'; late warnings; indecision in the first moments; aid that is slow in arriving; poor coordination and management of aid... and an urgent need to find a reason why (**'God, the universe, karma...', one hears in the media...**). The need for the consolation of human contact and an embrace; the passing of days without effective cleaning and hygiene services; cars being swept away; accusations being made, responsibilities being clarified; the devastated area as a breeding ground for chaos, disinformation and hoaxes to destabilise the system in moments of weakness and vulnerability...



**This picture was drawn by Maria Pilar Vela Hernandez, friend of our contemplative sister.**

In the face of all the anger and indignation, we commit to **"embrace and solidarity": 'Serving, helping, loving... we will do what we have to do'**.

**Ceferino Aguilera Ochoa**  
Lay Associate, Spain

## MARCH FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION



Mabwasele, a Claretian missionary.

He began his speech with the words: **'STOP WAR, STOP POVERTY, STOP VIOLENCE, STOP INJUSTICE'**. He went on to outline the aims of the march, which were to Raise awareness and mobilise many people of goodwill to fight against various wars around the world, as well as injustices, violence and crimes against humanity committed against defenceless civilians, especially women and children.

Mobilise the masses to work for justice and peace. Father went on to pinpoint the causes of the existence of several hotbeds of war in the world, most of which are politico-economic, the expression of the power-mania in certain individuals, certain nations, certain peoples. Those who are economically powerful set up political systems to weaken others, he added.

The speaker encouraged Christians, followers of Christ, to overcome evil with good.

Doing good, he said, is the secret of peace, a peace that is always the result of a long and demanding battle that can only be won by doing good.

After the conference, a Mass for Peace and Reconciliation was presided over by the Archbishop of Montreal, Christian Lépine, who in turn invited the participants to cultivate peace within themselves and around them by banishing all feelings of anger and envy.

Gathered in this Cathedral, we were people from 4 corners of the world, as expressed in the opening hymn. Our brothers and sisters from Quebec were present to march and pray for countries in conflict. An atmosphere of unity and brother/sisterhood reigned throughout the route, and you could read on the faces of the pilgrims and the people who watched them the desire to live in peace, solidarity and compassion.

Peace and reconciliation are the faces of Communion, of the unity that is our reason for being as members of the Holy Family. This is what motivated our commitment and participation in this march, a means of expressing our concern and indignation at the tragedy facing our humanity.

**Sr. Dolcita KALEMA**  
Canada



## PBN FAMILY JOINT FORMATION



On the afternoon of the 25th of August this year, in the Parish of Our Lady of Peace, in Comas (Lima), members of the Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles in Peru, consisting of Lay Associates, Consecrated Seculars and Apostolic Sisters, met together at the invitation of the local Family Team, who animated learning activities in Joint Formation. The aim was to try to put into practice our Synodality as a Family, walking together as a Family, listening to the Spirit and to others in our context, based on our document **Meeting Point N°7 from page 21 to 39**.

Prior to the meeting, the Family Team sent out some preparatory questions and requested that we sent in our responses. We reflected first on a personal level on the Principles of Synodality in

the papacy of Francis, as well as synodality in the life and work of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, particularly 'The dream of the Tree' of the Founder, symbol of inclusion, inculturation and communion for our Family.

In the **face-to-face stage** we worked on other social questions in the group and came to practical conclusions. We began with a beautiful prayer, organised by the local Family Team, about our commitment to follow Jesus Christ in the Holy Family.

This was also an opportunity to strengthen the bonds of Family and communion among the participants.

**Sr. Rubeni Pejerrey Campodónico**  
Peru

## CONSECRATION OF ST. LUKE'S PARISH CHURCH

**The consecration of the church of the Parish of Saint Luke in Ldubam-Tourou** is an event that has aroused much admiration and questions from those who know the context in which this Parish lives: the Security Crisis that the Far North Region of Cameroon has been experiencing since 2014.

But for the faithful of this Parish and their pastor, who live in this context, the perception of this event is different.

We're not surprised that we did it. Rather, we feel that we could have done better had it not been for the displacement of half of our faithful. It should be noted that Ldubam-Tourou became a parish in the middle of the crisis in 2017. All of which means that we must not make excuses for insecurity.

This people has journeyed with the grace of God like the people of Israel in exile. And we have already got into the

habit of calling the parish of Saint Luke of Ldubam-Tourou 'the new Israel'. The people have remained united around this Church project. Even when they were in the camps for displaced persons, the faithful sent their contributions for the construction of the church... It's a testimony to faith, solidarity and communion. Above all, it's a sign that God is at work in this area, despite the insecurity.

For us as pastors of this parish, this church remains a symbol of the community resilience of these people, a symbol of their attachment to God and therefore of their faith, a symbol of their hope, a symbol of self-financing, which has been one of the major thrusts of the diocesan pastoral vision since

the arrival of Monsignor Bruno ATEBA EDO: the church was built with the proceeds of the harvest, without any outside help. This community dynamism should inspire other parishes in the diocese.

We are delighted to have participated in this work, to

have accompanied the workers, the faithful, until the completion of the construction. We thank and bless the parishioners of Ldubam-Tourou for their commitment, their dedication, their determination and above all for their love for the Church.

**Abbé TEGAMBA Basile**  
Parish Priest, Cameroun

## JOY, A GIFT FROM GOD

As Abbé TEGAMBA Basile, parish priest of Saint Luc de Ldoubam-TOUROU, testifies, on this day of 19 October 2024, we are witnesses to this achievement, which was made in the midst of this period of insecurity, which still persists. Looking at the crowds and the beauty of the women, one could say that it's not true that this parish is really located on the border with Nigeria, a place often visited by terrorists. A great joy burst forth, and on the faces you could read hope. Where does this deep joy and courage come from? The answer is: HOPE. It does not deceive. It's true that a lot of people have been displaced, but many are still present.



Four of us Holy Family Sisters took part in this consecration. It was Sister Jacintha Anthony's first trip out of Mokolo. The joy in the Church brought tears to my eyes because I would not be able to stay in that place. Then this young priest showed great courage to support his flock. You could see it in his face, an unusual strength, a living faith: It's a simple way of being a pastor, without giving up on them during difficult times.

This event is a real miracle of faith. Knowing how to give yourself because God is God, God is present; this is the sign that encourages us to remain close to the people of God. This diocesan priest who has done everything to ensure that the gifts of Christians are used for the good of all, without thinking of his own comfort or safety.

We give thanks to the Master of Life for this sign of hope that He has placed in this people. Happy are those who give without counting the cost, for in God they find their true freedom. Our prayer is that God will continue to bless the Church in our Diocese, and that He may sustain the faith of these simple people.

**Sr. Agnès ONGWISA**  
Nazareth community, Cameroun

*Sr. Mampheteli Clementine Sekantsi, a missionary consecrated religious serving the poor in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, has raised funds to feed homeless people for 25 weeks in honour of her silver jubilee. As an expression of gratitude to God's call and in solidarity with the poor, Sister 'Mampheteli Clementine Sekantsi, a member of the Congregation of the Holy Family Sisters of Bordeaux, chose a unique way to celebrate the 25th anniversary of her religious profession. Sr. Sekantsi wanted to share her joy with others in small 'bites.'*

The sister's apostolate includes cooking and sharing meals with homeless people in Pietermaritzburg who are assisted by two organizations, namely St Mary's Catholic Church Soup Kitchen and Life Changer. So, in keeping with her mission, *Sr. Sekantsi asked her family and friends to assist her financially to feed people living on the streets for 25 weeks.*

She felt this would be a way of involving others in her work of paying it forward as a thanksgiving to God for her vocation. It also served to create awareness among those close to her so that they might better understand the plight of the poor and get involved in assisting them.

**Ministry life as a missionary:**  
*"I have taken to heart the work of giving hope and encouragement to young people on the streets in Pietermaritburg," she recounts. As part of a team working with people who live on the streets, she is involved in counselling and in organizing prayer meetings where she shares with them the Word of*

*God. "Prayer and contemplation of life of the Holy Family," she said, "has always been the source of energy for all the ministries I have been privileged to be part of."*

Sr. Sekantsi recalled that she has worn many apostolic hats in her 25 years of religious life. She has worked as a catechism teacher, a radio presenter, an adoption social worker, a pastoral care agent for migrants and refugees, and an aid worker for people who live on the streets. With her passion for safeguarding children, Sr. Sekantsi said her current ministry involves accompanying the people on the streets. "I often contemplate Jesus's words in the Good Samaritan parable where he said, *'...go and do likewise'.*"

Inspiration from first missionaries; Throughout her missionary life as a Mosotho religious sister, Sr. Sekantsi she has been inspired by the first missionary sisters who left their country, France, in 1864 and arrived in Lesotho in 1865. Over the years, Lesotho has benefited immensely from religious women from different countries of the world. "When I read the history of our congregation and of the Church in Lesotho, I am encouraged by their commitment and I realise how selflessly they gave of themselves, for the betterment of others", she said. *"I am standing on the shoulders of selfless missionary women who came before me"*, said Sr. Sekantsi.

Missionary life in Rwanda and South Africa; In 2003,



Sr. 'Mampheteli Clementine Sekantsi prepares food for those in need in Pietermaritzburg

Sr. Sekantsi was sent to Rwanda as a missionary living in an intercultural community of the sisters. "It was through the composition of this community of diverse nationalities that we proclaimed to the people of Rwanda that communion is possible," she said. *"As a Holy Family sister, the impact is through life-giving relationships in the community, which then carry us to different apostolic ministries, so we can bear witness together."*

Responding to the needs of Rwandans brought Sr. Sekantsi to offer pastoral care to families and the sick. "I embraced my ministry with the people affected by genocide by visiting the families and building healthy relationships," she said, adding that she shared their joys, sorrows, and challenges. "I felt so much a part of the people, a true spirit of synodality," she said.

In South Africa, Sr. Sekantsi worked mainly with families as a child protection service provider, serving in foster care placement of children who needed care.

**Significance of apostolate ministry;** Sr. Sekantsi believes that, in every ministry that she serves, her responsibility is to be with the people according to the charism of the Holy Family, which is to create communion. *"Simplicity is one of the values that the Holy Family of Nazareth is known for,"* she noted.



In her work with the homeless, Sr Sekantsi seeks to create a loving, non judgemental, and encouraging environment to aid their recovery, explaining that the majority of people on the

streets struggle with addictions. "I am part of a team that offers lifeboat services to them," said the religious sister. *"My role is to give hope to the hopeless, encouragement to the discour-*

*aged, empowerment to the powerless and a safe environment that fosters change for a better life."*

By Sr.Katleho Khang, SNJM

(This article is taken from the Vatican News on 22/11/2024)

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2024-11/sisters-project-103-south-africa-clementine-sekantsi-charity.html>

## O GOD, IT IS GOOD TO GIVE YOU THANKS

Leaving the bustle of everyday life behind ... giving ourselves 'a little time to take care of ourselves' and renewing our energies on the shores of Lake Kivu...

It feels so good! Crossing to the other shore ... I discover the joy of encounter.

Contemplating creation on the shores of Lake Kivu, listening to the sounds of the water and the waves, the different bird-songs... really discovering that all creation awakens and falls asleep in God. Everything that lives and breathes sings praise to the Lord! This moment of relaxation allowed me to appreciate and welcome **'life and creation as a gift from God'** by singing a few refrains: Almighty God, when my heart considers the whole Universe created by Your Power... Then a song rises from my heart ... O God of Love, how great You are!

How beautiful are Your works ... How great are Your works Lord, You fill us with Joy! All the works of the Lord bless the Lord! Glory and eternal

Praise to Him!

Gustave also helped me to sing a few lines in Kinyarwanda: **'Oya, oya, oya ye , Sinogenda ndashime ... or Ubundashima , ubundatamba ... yewe Komenya ...'**. When we behold the marvels of nature, how can we not give thanks to God with all our heart!

And from 8.30pm onwards, all is silence...

Thank you, Lord, for all creation and for the people who work together to safeguard creation, every being created in the Universe and our planet Earth.

I had time to talk with Gustave and Philémon about their choice of job as boatmen, sailing all day on Lake Kivu... With a smile, Philémon replied, "it's a wonderful job; it allows us to help people cross to the other side, it's a way of helping others discover the beauty of nature and the water... the magnificence of God! Of course, it's a risky job when the boat sinks, which is why we wear life jackets, as do all the

people on board the boat. It's also a way of sharing our joy of meeting tourists ... people from different countries - cultures - races - languages. It's wonderful!"

This is how I express my deep gratitude to Philemon, Timothy and all those other people **'WITH A UNIVERSAL HEART'** who, out of love for their brothers and sisters in humanity, have chosen to wear a Life Jacket in order to help others **"cross to the other shore"** and save so many human lives in the event of shipwreck, in the Mediterranean Sea, on rivers and lakes throughout the world. May the Lord reward them a hundredfold.

Sr. Pauline MANZUETO  
GIKO NGORO, RWANDA



"Coffee in one hand, confidence in the other." This phrase perfectly captures the allure of coffee. It's a beverage that inspires, energizes, and connects people. I decided to explore the reasons why people love coffee by asking a few friends. Their responses were varied but all centred around the positive effects of coffee.

One friend shared that coffee helped them overcome tiredness and feel more focused and refreshed. Another friend discovered a love for coffee's aroma and caffeine which made them feel new and good. For another, coffee has been a constant companion since childhood, and enjoys preparing it for others.

I sincerely acknowledge that I can't quite capture their exact expressions in words. But I can certainly relate. As a fellow coffee enthusiast, I know the feeling of missing a vital part of my day when I don't have my morning cup. It's like missing a close companion. Sometimes, life's experiences make us question our encounters with others. We might wonder, 'Why did I meet this person?' or 'Why didn't I meet them sooner?' Yes, friends I also have some common phenomena same like you to share.

In the academic year 2023-2024, there were two special



heroes Anmol Dahayat and Riyansh Gupta who were famous for getting zeros in the examinations. To help them succeed, I appointed them as class monitors, sought their assistance, praised them publicly, offered them opportunities to participate in school events, highlighted their achievements, and provided positive feedback to their parents. They became the centre of my attention, receiving my love, care, concern, and undivided focus.

On November 25, 2023, Holy Cross Convent Senior Secondary School organized a "School Fete" to raise funds for the poor. Each class was required to set up a stall, and as the class teacher, I selected a group of ten students, including those two heroes Anmol Dahayat and Riyansh Gupta, to manage a food stall. The students' initiative and hard work were commendable, and their parents expressed their appreciation. Our efforts were rewarded with two second-place prizes: one for discipline and cleanliness, and the other for significant fundraising at

the primary level. This experience had a positive impact on all the students, particularly the two struggling students. They gained confidence, improved their academic performance, and were promoted to the next grade. I am grateful for the opportunity and thanked God for blessing me with the quality of coffee to accompany these students on their journey of growth and development.

**In August 2024, a new student named Anirudh Kumar Sinha joined my fourth-grade class. Although he was of Indian origin, he had been born and raised in Ethiopia. Anirudh quickly adapted to my teaching style and seemed content.**

Since he joined the class late, I took it upon myself to teach him cursive writing personally. One day, Anirudh approached me with a question: **"Sister, please don't misunderstand me, but why do you look so angry when you enter the classroom? You are so nice otherwise."**

His honesty made me reflect on my own behaviour. I explained that I often wore a mask of temporary anger to manage the class. To my surprise, he was pleased with my explanation. However, it made me question myself Why did I feel the need to wear a mask? Couldn't I be smiling and loving all the time? His insightful question prompted

me to re-evaluate my approach and entrance to the classroom are turned with a more positive and loving attitude. This nine-year-old boy became a coffee of awareness. I am grateful to him for opening my eyes to a new perspective.

Life provides opportunities for us to develop the qualities of coffee and be a cup of coffee

to those in need. Let us be a source of warmth, comfort, and inspiration for others. Let us also appreciate the coffee that others bring into our lives, for it can enrich our experiences and make life more meaningful.

**Sr.Prince Elizabeth Savariyar  
India**

## CELEBRATION OF 231ST BIRTHDAY OF OUR FOUNDER



As we celebrate our Founder's birthday, we draw inspiration from the Holy Family of Nazareth – Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Their lives, though simple, embody profound spiritual lessons that guide us on our own paths. Let's reflect on their exemplary values and virtues by celebrating our **Good Father's 231st birthday.**

It was a blessed day for each member of the PBN family in Pakistan. We joined together to celebrate this birthday in an extraordinary way, there was a variety of programs on the life of our Good Father, his childhood, youth, vocation and

his life as a priest. The Holy Family children had a quiz program as well. 370 children participated to make this day memorable. The Holy Family Youth, Children, Lay Associates, Priest Associates, Candidates, Aspirants, Sisters, all were in one platform in communion based on the charism given by our dear Founder.

We began the celebration with the Eucharist. The participants held the flags of Holy Family and the banners of our Founder's birthday and entered the church in procession. Many other people joined

this celebration to thank the Lord for the inspirational life of our Good Father.

Fr. Waqar Amer in his homily said the vocation is a precious gift to each one of us from God. Our Founder's life was filled with challenges and difficulties but he never gave up, his life stands as a witness for us that we are called to embrace challenges and yet to build hope for the sustainability of the universe. May this celebration fill us with the spark of love and faith so that we may continue to spread communion at any cost.

There was a cultural programme which was organized by the Candidates along with the Youth and Children. The life of our Founder - childhood, youth and his priestly life were depicted. Sr. Sonam composed a song which was beautifully sung by the hostel boys. The Lay Associates shared their faith experiences and also, they conducted a quiz program



based on the life of our Founder. The youth and children from different parishes participated and won prizes. All the members of the PBN family played their vital role to make this event successful.

Father Samuel George, Priest Associate, said this gathering was not an event but a proof of love which we have towards for our Good Father and for all the members of the Holy Family. He added that it is the **“Spirit of God Alone”** which helps us to enjoy the blessings of being one Family. Subsequently Fr. John Murad the Parish priest also expressed his gratitude at being part of this

event.

Sr. Parveen Falaksher, Unit Leader thanked everyone for making this day a milestone in the history of our presence in Pakistan by gathering the Priest Associates, Lay Associates, youth and children on one platform which is a sign of Communion. As we honour our Founder's life by celebrating his birthday, we draw strength from the Holy Family of Nazareth who taught us love and unity. May their examples encourage us to:

- ☞ **Deepen our trust in God's plan**
- ☞ **Embody humility and compassion**

- ☞ **Serve others with love and forgiveness**
- ☞ **Love creation, spread communion in all circumstances as our Founder and the Holy Family, who loved, sought and desired God Alone in all.**

By embracing these values, we become beacons of hope for each other and for the people of God. May the life of our Founder strengthen us to live and celebrate communion in our day-to-day life. Having enjoyed the festive meal together prepared by the Sisters, we departed with grateful hearts promising to remain faithful to the beautiful **Charism of COMMUNION.**



**Holy Family Sisters  
Pakistan**

**Life at a Rubber Estate...**

**A journey of facing challenges and difficulties while sharing life in a rubber estate was an eye-opening experience for us as the JPIC team in Colombo.** The reality revealed the resilience and dedication of the workers, who lead lives filled with challenges, both physical and economic. When we visited the remote countryside, the estates appeared to be places of simplicity, but a deeper look unveiled the struggles that shape the lives of its inhabitants.

**The Strenuous Life of Rubber Workers:** Rubber-tapping is a labor-intensive process that requires skill and endurance. The workers shared their lives with us, explaining how they begin their day early in the morning, making their way through rows of trees to tap the rubber. This painstaking task demands experience; a single wrong cut can ruin a tree or drastically reduce its yield. The nature of this work causes physical strain, as bending and cutting affects many workers with chronic aches and pains. We met several workers who often end up cutting themselves while tapping the rubber. Despite their hard work, these workers often receive minimal compensation. With low wages, they struggle to meet basic living conditions, with limited access to healthcare and education for their children.



The estate is located far from the nearest town, with poorly maintained roads that make travel difficult. Some of our Sisters couldn't walk the following day due to leg pain. During our stay, it was the rainy season, making it nearly impossible for us to travel on foot along the uneven roads. Yet we joined hands with the workers, who frequently walk long distances to reach their workplace, carrying heavy loads of rubber. The economic situation of these people is another major challenge: when rubber prices fluctuate during times of low demand, wages decrease even further. Many workers take on additional jobs, but opportunities are limited. For workers' families, the future can seem bleak, with education beyond reach for many children.

Despite the difficulties, the people of the area show remarkable resilience and a strong sense of community, offering love and concern to one another. They help each other in times of need, maintaining bonds that help



them survive their harsh realities. They also contribute to safeguarding the web of life through sustainable practices, such as reducing harm to rubber trees and other species, allowing the forest to regenerate and support diverse life. They focus on preserving water resources, and we enjoyed the natural forest areas within and around the rubber estates.

In conclusion, our work with rubber estate workers left us with a deep sense of respect and love for those who persevere despite the overwhelming challenges they face. Though their lives are filled with hardships, they continue day after day, working to provide for their families and contribute to the global economy.

**JPIC Team  
Colombo, Sri Lanka**



## A HARMONIOUS SYMPHONY: PBN FAMILY'S CELEBRATION OF CREATION



The PBN Family in the Diocese of Sorsogon, in collaboration with the PBN Foundation Project, embarked on a significant journey to safeguard the Web of Life by partnering with parishes, Pastoral Councils, Barangay Leaders, High Schools and the Diocesan Social Action in Sorsogon. This special celebration was open to all in the Diocese of Sorsogon.

### **A Collective Effort for Environmental Stewardship**

Our collective goal is to empower communities through various environmental initiatives. The focus is on creating groups that work together to address local ecological challenges. Key activities include river restoration, mangrove replanting, bamboo planting, and community gardening. These initiatives not only restore ecosystems but also raise awareness about the urgent need for environmental protection.

### **Celebrating the Season of Creation: A Day of Hope and Action**

On October 12, 2024, the PBN Family in Sorsogon commemorated the Season of Creation with the International theme "**To Hope and Act with Creation.**" The event, held at Rizal Elementary School, brought together students, faculty, religious leaders, and community members to celebrate and commit to environmental stewardship.

The day began with a mangrove planting activity and coastal cleanup, symbolizing a collective

effort to restore and preserve coastal ecosystems. This was followed by a Holy Mass, where the spiritual significance of creation and humanity's role in safeguarding the environment were emphasized.

A series of inspiring talks and presentations followed. Mrs. Lamuelle Vianca Domdom shed light on the global climate crisis and the urgent need for action. Dr. Jose Quiring underscored the importance of ecological conversion, both individually and collectively.

The event also featured cultural performances, including a mural painting activity and dance presentations, showcasing the community's creativity and commitment to environmental sustainability.

The event was huge success, with nearly 300 participants. The cooperation of the people was evident in their active participation.

### **A Call to Action**

The celebration of the Season of Creation was more than just an event; it was a catalyst for action. By uniting diverse stakeholders, the PBN Family in Sorsogon has demonstrated the power of community engagement in addressing environmental challenges. The initiatives undertaken and the lessons learned will continue to inspire and guide future efforts to safeguard the environment and build a sustainable future.

**Sr. Bernie De Silva  
Philippines**



## INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITY

As part of a broader leadership initiative, between the Provinces of Colombo and Jaffna, I was invited to contribute to the development of an "Intercultural Community" in a local setting. This opportunity aligned with my personal aspiration to engage in such a community-driven lifestyle, leading me to make a firm commitment. Consequently, I joined the Diyatalawa community, a journey that required patience and adaptability as I gradually became acquainted with its members and their unique circumstances.

In the initial phase, we were encouraged to focus on building strong relationships among ourselves. Once that foundation was laid, we shifted our attention towards ministry. As I reflected on my role and the impact of the ministry, I encountered many internal questions and challenges, particularly regarding my ability to effectively serve in this new environment. One of the key challenges I faced was the language barrier, as most people speak Sinhala in my parish, a language in which I am not fluent. I initially sought easier methods to establish my ministry, but progress was slow. However, over time, I adapted to the local context. Eventually, I realized that language was not the only factor in building connections; I relied on a deeper sense of commitment and effort to engage with the community to the best of my abilities.

### Social Issues

I became more aware of the pressing social issues affecting the community, including:

- ☞ **Mixed Marriages** – Many individuals marry

outside their religion, often to Buddhists, and subsequently lose connection with their religious roots.

- ☞ **Parental Absence** – Many parents work abroad or outside the region, leaving children in the care of grandparents. This has led to issues of neglect.
- ☞ **Economic Crisis** – A significant portion of the community lives in poverty.

### Women's Empowerment Initiative

In the light of these challenges, I felt a strong need to focus on empowering women in the local area. After several discussions, I decided to initiate a "Women's Group" to tap in to their potential and provide them with opportunities to sustain and develop their talents and skills. The group is diverse,

comprising members who speak both Sinhala and Tamil, and operates on a micro level.

### The group's primary areas of focus are:

- ☞ Psychological Well-being
- ☞ Economic Empowerment
- ☞ Environmental Protection

Our first successful meeting was held at our premises, with Mr. Bazeer Mohamed Rashad, the North and Eastern Province Coordinator for the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board (NDDCB), serving as the guest speaker. His talk on "Building Healthy Family Relationships" was well-received, and many participants gained valuable insights to improve their family dynamics in the coming days.

Sr. Shoba Vincent  
Jaffna, Sri Lanka

