



# Interconnections

NO. 72

MAY 2026

INFO/COM SERVICE



*“To the other shore with the  
Risen Christ”*

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*"Today, on four continents, from within the vocations to priestly, religious, married and single life, Holy Family members continue to discern and respond to the needs of the time".*

*(Choosing life)*



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*“To the other shore with the Risen Christ”* is a beautiful call and a profound invitation to all of us. It invites us to renew and re-energize our journey of faith in the light of the Resurrection. The Risen Lord is no longer present in the same physical way as before, yet His presence is deeper, wider, and closer than ever.

The Gospel explains in a simple way how Jesus revealed this new mode of presence to His disciples. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus walks beside them even when they do not recognize Him. In Galilee, He waits on the shore and prepares a meal after their long and fruitless night, turning disappointment into encounter. And in His promise, He assures them: *“I am with you always.”*

These moments remind us that Jesus meets us not only in clarity, but also in confusion; not only in success, but also in struggles, failures, and searching.

Our General Chapter 2021 challenged us with this theme, *“Can we still live our purpose as we begin our third century?”* and invited us to reflect deeply on it as we move forward, following Jesus, who calls us: *“Let us go to the other shore.”* Over the past years, we have journeyed with this theme, which continues to guide our mission in different contexts and situations. Yet, we must ask ourselves personally: what does it mean to go to the other shore today?

The other shore is not just a place - **it is a step forward, a transformation, a transition.** It often lies beyond what is comfortable and familiar. It is not always easy, and the way is not always clear; it is often unknown, and the paths can be



difficult to walk. It demands courage, conviction, trust, and the willingness to move ahead even when we cannot see the whole path. **But remember that we do not journey alone. The One who walked with the disciples, who waited for them, and who promised to remain with them, walks with us too - sometimes unseen, yet always present.**

To go to the other shore is not simply to leave something behind. It is to discover Christ in a new way, to allow Him to transform our fear into faith and our uncertainty into mission. This journey belongs to all of us whether in family life or religious life. Each of us is called in a different way, yet we walk together as one people, guided by the same hope.

The Risen Christ goes before us, walks beside us, and waits for us in every new beginning. So, when the path feels uncertain, take the next step. When the crossing seems difficult, trust Him. Because the other shore is not only a place where we reach - **it is a life we begin to live, here and now, with Him.**

Sr. Mercy Rani JEBAMALAI

## Prayer for PEACE

“Peace be with you!” These are the words the risen Jesus repeatedly spoke to his disciples during his various apparitions. As we are still in the Easter season, these words of Jesus touch our hearts deeply. On Saturday, 11 April 2026, at 6.00 pm, Pope Leo XIV invited the Church of Rome to pray for peace, given the wars and conflicts currently ravaging the world.

Many Christians gathered in the Basilica and in **St.Peter’s Square** to recite the Rosary with the Pope through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace. As a community, we joined this crowd imploring peace in all its forms.

Inside the Basilica, the five mysteries were represented by the five continents: a group of four people would walk towards the Virgin Mary and light a candle.

We were there, with our rosaries and the flags of various countries, praying and thinking of the people who are being killed or who are experiencing exile, violence and frustrations of all kinds, rape, and so on. When Pope Leo passed by us and saw the words ‘peace in the DRC’ written on the flag of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, he nodded... We could sense his compassion and desire for peace in the world, just as he never ceases to repeat every Sunday during the Angelus.

The following week, a prayer gathering with the people was organised – a night-time pilgrimage (from the night of Saturday 18th to the morning of Sunday 19th April 2026). This pilgrimage extended the Vatican’s call for peace. Led by Cardinal Vicar Baldo REINA, the faithful of all nationalities walked together.

From 11.30 pm, a buzz of excitement filled Porta Capena Square: with lit candles, rosaries and devotional images in hand, the faithful set off at midnight. With the illuminated cross leading the crowd and the icon of Our Lady in the centre, the procession began its fifteen-kilometre journey towards the Marian Shrine of **‘Our Lady of Divine Love’ (Madonna Del Divino Amore)**.

The community was represented by two Sisters. The Rosary was prayed in twenty-two



languages; punctuated by songs, sacred hymns and moments of silence fostering inner reflection. It was very well organised despite the darkness, the cold and the fatigue. Some people fell and got back up; this walk was like a true journey of purification. A single intention for all: to intercede for world peace.

The civil defence service was there to support the pilgrims, with torches and emergency equipment. The journey concluded with a beautiful, intercultural Eucharist at 5.00 am in the Sanctuary. It was presided over by Cardinal Baldo Reina, who compared this experience to that of the disciples of Emmaus.

It was deeply moving to see this multitude of the faithful, of all ages, even those with reduced mobility, walking and praying for peace. It was truly a march of hope, an act of faith, conviction and devotion to Our Lady of Divine Love who, during the Second World War, spared the city of Rome from bombing.

**Srs.Marie-Pierre OTIBA &  
Christine FENE-FENE  
Generalate Local Community, Rome**

## Looking to the future through the eyes of migrants



In Málaga (Spain), three Holy Family Lay Members have, for over a year now, been running a legally-recognised non-profit organisation to help migrant families find decent living conditions. They have named this organisation **Sedeq SFB (Sedeq is Hebrew for 'justice')**

To this end, they contact villages in the province of Málaga that are at risk of depopulation and seek to meet the needs of both parties, helping migrant families to integrate into rural communities that lack enough people to bring them to life.

Over time, more people have joined this association to collaborate with it, including more lay members of the Holy Family, as well as others who are contributing their knowledge and experience to this project.

They have presented this initiative to various public and private organisations, including the Pierre Bienvenu Noailles Foundation, which has welcomed it with great interest and is providing financial support.

In this short space of time, there have already been some very beautiful and promising life-experiences. A Moroccan woman, a victim of gender-based violence, has been living with her five young children in a village in the province of Málaga for almost nine months now, discovering that with help and determination, it is possible to escape the very difficult situations caused by our current society.

That family is once again looking to the future and embracing life with hope. In that village, the sound of laughing children running and playing in the squares can be heard once more, filling the once-silent streets with joy.

This Association was founded under the inspiration of the Charism of the Good Father Noailles, whose fundamental aim is to make the of world one family, where people of different races, languages, cultures and ethnicities can live together in harmony, demonstrating that unity can be built through diversity.

You can find much more information about us on the website [sedeqsfb.org](https://sedeqsfb.org).

**Marta Monserrate,  
Lay Associate, Spain**

## A Life of Faith and Service

*At the beginning of this year, Terri Coonan (Holy Family Lay Members' Leader in Ireland) took part in a 4-day workshop for Activists, designed to equip emerging campaigners with strategic skills for social change. She shared with her companions on the Britain & Ireland Communications Team that various people advised her beforehand not to mention faith or religion to the other participants, because they would be "put off". However, she followed her heart, and determined to be herself – a woman whose faith is important to her. She says that she met amazing people, all over 20 years younger than herself, and that several of them entered into "faith conversations" with her during the course of the seminar. The following is the way she introduced herself to her workshop companions: (E. Hughes)*

**A Life of Faith and Service:** My name is Terri. I'm 63, married to Diarmuid for almost 42 years, and I live in Kildare, Ireland. We have two wonderful adult children, Jenni and James. Like many people of my generation, I've lived many lives so far - daughter, sister, friend, banker, wife, mother, teacher, examiner, volunteer - and I've been involved in local community and religious groups for many years, from the local Community Council to our Local Development Company, Holy Family Lay Members Ireland and everything in between.

My faith is hugely important to me and in recent years, my focus has shifted more strongly toward parish life and voluntary work, including being a founder-member of the Suaimhneas (Eng: Peace, Tranquillity, Quiet) Meditation Centre in Clane four years ago. For me, contemplation *and* action must always go hand in hand. That belief was shaped early in my life. I grew up in rural Tipperary, where my late and much-loved father was deeply involved in local issues - working with farmers' groups and serving in local politics at a time when councillors weren't paid. From him, I learned the importance of standing up for fairness and community.

These are scary times and I have seen how fear of difference can affect rational people. I've seen where that fear can lead. As a child, I witnessed a



group of people ask my father to prevent a local farm from being sold to someone of another faith. Both he and I were horrified [at this reaction]. When the new neighbours arrived, we welcomed them openly - and that experience stayed with me. I believe activism begins with empathy - with seeing others as part of ourselves and acting from that understanding. I've been deeply affected by the recent rise in anti-immigration sentiment and the spread of misinformation. We are a country whose people have long sought welcome, work, and community abroad - the so-called land of a thousand welcomes - yet fear and anger toward newcomers are increasingly visible, and I find that deeply troubling.

My hope is to start a **Hands of Friendship** initiative in my village. I believe many people want to help but don't know where to begin, or doubt that their actions will matter. I want to change that. Every small, mindful act can create powerful ripples. The initiative would begin with simple community action encouraging people to be welcoming, curious, and kind to everyone in our community. I believe this weekend can give me the practical tools, mentorship, and language I need to communicate this vision clearly and inspire participation, while keeping compassion at the centre of the work. I hope to share what I learn with our local group and others and perhaps to develop a model that could be adapted by other towns and villages - spreading welcome, understanding, and peace. At its heart, this is about turning people away from anger and division, and toward the shared hopes we all hold for our families and our communities.

**Terri Coonan**  
Lay Associate, Ireland

## A new beginning: Young people building a Family in ATE



With joy, enthusiasm and in a spirit of friendship, **on 19 March** – a very special date for us as the Holy Family of Bordeaux, as we celebrate St. Joseph, patron saint of our Family – a group of young people was invited to the community of Ate. Our aim was to introduce ourselves, and to present the vocation of Young Associates.

During this first meeting, the identity and mission

of the Holy Family of Bordeaux were shared with the young people through videos, posters and a time for sharing their faith, fostering a friendly, warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Subsequently, accepting the invitation to become an active part of this great Family, the young people began their formation process on Palm Sunday, a deeply significant date for our Church. Just as the people welcomed Jesus with joy, they too open their hearts to embrace this call and enthusiastically take on the mission of being and building Family within their community.

In this way, the youth group begins its journey with hope, encouraging more young people to join and to experience an encounter with God and with one another.

### Two young people share their thoughts:



**Sandy Canchari:** The invitation to be part of this youth group, which is setting out to discover and live out the Charism of the Holy Family of Bordeaux, made the words of the Good Father resonate in my heart: “Listen to God’s invitation and go forth doing good.” My ‘yes’ to the invitation has been in the joy of knowing that even in my youth, God continues to call me.

**Andrea Martínez:** Today I receive this invitation with gratitude. Being part of the Holy Family of Bordeaux is an opportunity to grow in faith, draw closer to God and live in community with love and simplicity. I feel both joy and a sense of responsibility at this call, and I want to give my very best, allow myself to be guided by God, and live with love, humility and hope. I accept this invitation with enthusiasm, trusting that I will grow and build community alongside other young people.

Sr.Cintia Santos  
Peru

## A church on the move: Reflections on Pope Leo XIV's Visit...



**F**rom 15 to 18 April 2026, Cameroon welcomed the apostolic visit of Pope Leo XIV. In Yaoundé, the Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux had the joy of experiencing this major ecclesial event as part of the People of God. The celebrations, meetings and moments of communion made this visit a truly spiritual and missionary experience for us.

As a community, we were deeply moved by this Church event. The moments spent by the roadside, alongside the many Christians who had come to welcome the Pope, as well as our presence at the Catholic University of Central Africa (UCAC) as students, were special times for us. We also took part in the Pontifical High Mass, the highlight of this visit, where we were deeply nourished by the Word of God and the Holy Father's message.

These various experiences have strengthened within us the sense of belonging to a people on the move, united in faith and hope. For all this, we give thanks to the Lord, recog-



nising in these events a true divine visitation. It is in this spirit of thanksgiving that we look back on this visit, lived under the theme of 'crossing to the other side' (Mk 4:35), as a call to move forward with confidence despite the challenges.

The Holy Father's pilgrimage across the country unfolded in several stages, each of them rich in meaning. Upon his arrival in Yaoundé on the first day, there was a meeting with the highest authorities of the State, demonstrating the Church's concern for social and political realities. The visit to the Ngul Zamba orphanage, run by the Sisters Servants of Mary of Yaoundé, then served as a concrete reminder of the preferential love for the least and the most vulnerable. The day continued with a private meeting with the bishops, a powerful sign of communion and shared pastoral responsibility.

On the second day, the Holy Father travelled to Bamenda, where his message took on a particularly strong tone centred on peace, reconciliation and the healing of social

wounds. This stage was experienced as an urgent call to overcome divisions and build lasting fraternal relationships.

On the third day, he travelled to Douala, where he encouraged the faithful to live out

concrete solidarity and a genuine commitment to a more just society. In his homily, the Holy Father made a deep impression with the freedom and sincerity of his words; as many felt, "one senses a free and sincere man", courageously upholding the demands of the Gospel and inviting everyone to an authentic conversion in the management of the world's goods and the service of others. Following this beautiful celebration, the Holy Father visited the Saint-Paul Catholic Hospital in Nylon, run by the Sisters Servants of Mary of Douala, to show his concern for the sick and to encourage the medical staff. He then travelled to Yaoundé, to the UCAC, to address the academic community. It was a moment that was both moving and inspiring, in the service of justice and truth.

Finally, the last day was crowned by the Pontifical High Mass celebrated at the 101st Air Base in Yaoundé, bringing together a huge crowd in deep communion. This moment constituted the spiritual high-point of the visit, leaving in everyone a renewed desire to follow in the

footsteps of Christ.

Thus, through these various stages, we experienced a true spiritual journey to the other shore, that of renewed faith, living hope and missionary

commitment. For us, the Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux, this visit remains a call to continue our mission with boldness, simplicity and charity, being living witnesses

to God's love at the heart of the world.

**Communaute de Yaounde  
Cameroun -Tchad**



## **All through GOD ALONE**

**W**hen I take time to reflect on my life as a priest, I am drawn to a simple but profound truth: God has been faithful through it all. My journey has not always been easy or predictable, yet in every season I have come to recognize His quiet presence guiding me forward. Living and serving in a different diocese in South Africa has taught me what it means to be physically alone, yet spiritually connected. There are moments when the silence is deep, but it is within that silence that I have encountered God in a more personal way.

This past Easter season brought an experience that touched me in a very real way. On Holy Wednesday, I joined my brother priests and our Bishop for the Chrism Mass: a beautiful celebration that reminded me of the unity we share in our calling. Later that day as our custom, we were welcomed by one of our brother priests in Ladybrand. We spent the evening together in fraternity sharing stories and strengthening the bonds that connect us, before resting for the night. However, at dawn on Holy Thursday I suddenly became ill and had to be hospitalized. It was an unexpected and humbling moment. Lying



there, I found myself reflecting on the suffering of Christ, especially as we were entering into the sacred days of His Passion. In my weakness, I quietly united my suffering with His. What I had so often preached became something I now experienced in a more personal and real way.

That moment revealed to me the depth of communion, not only as a CHARISM we speak about, but as a lived reality. Even in the hospital, I was not alone. I was united with Christ in His suffering, and I felt connected to the prayers and support of others. Communion, I realized, is not limited by distance or circumstance; it is a bond of love that holds us together, especially in our most vulnerable moments. Today I am well again and I continue serving my parishioners with renewed strength and gratitude. This experience has changed me, it has deepened my faith, softened my heart and reminded me to trust more fully in God's

plan. As I move forward, I carry this lesson with me: that true communion is found not only in shared joy, but also in shared suffering, in presence and in love. I thank God for this journey, for every grace, every challenge and every quiet reminder of God's closeness.

**Fr. Simon Sakhi MOFOKENG  
Priest Associate, Lesotho**

## Beyond the rough: Finding the Risen Christ on the other shore



The Nandi Hills Deanery is a beautiful community of faith woven across five parishes, reaching even the most distant corners like Kapkeno. On Quasimodo Sunday, the Catholic Women Association (CWA) felt a divine pull to journey there in a spirit of motherhood and solidarity. When the Chairperson invited me, she didn't hide the truth: the roads to this remote outpost were rugged, dusty, hard and difficult. Yet, I felt a deep stir in my soul to say "yes." I realized then that reaching the "other shore" with the Risen Christ often means traveling the most difficult paths. With a heart ready for the challenge, I joined these women, eager to witness the light of the Resurrected Lord shining in the furthest reaches of Kapkeno.

At 8:00 AM, we started our journey with the Rosary and hymns. Soon, the mountain roads became so bad that our

bus had to stop. We had to walk three kilometers up a very steep hill. Even though I was exhausted, the CWA mothers lived up to their motto, "**Strong in Faith.**" They climbed with songs and prayers, never looking tired. When we finally reached Kapkeno at 10:45 AM, my feelings changed. My usual complaints about walking to church disappeared when I saw their joy on such a hard path. This journey taught me that we find the Risen Christ not on easy roads, but by facing hard times with a thankful heart.

The moment we arrived, our weariness vanished. We were wrapped in the warm embrace of the Parish Priest and CWA mothers from across the deanery. Together, we gathered for a beautiful Thanksgiving Mass celebrated by Fr. Daniel and Fr. Michael Langat. During the homily, Fr. Daniel spoke words that pierced our hearts: just as St. Thomas reached out to touch the wounds of Jesus, we touch the Risen Christ today by serving the poor and marginalized in these remote areas where few others visit. He

reminded us that the CWA is more than just a group, it is a powerful motherhood meant to sustain one another's faith. It was a stirring call to live out the motto of CWA, "**Strong in Faith,**" through deep humility and a renewed devotion to the Eucharist. In that sacred space, the "other shore" was no longer a distant destination, it was present right there in our unity and prayer.

After the Mass, I was honored to share a reflection with the CWA mothers. I spoke about the hand as a symbol of our mission: just as the thumb is the essential foundation for the hand to function, a mother is the pillar of the Church. I reminded the CWA that our true power flows from a "Strong Faith," not from material wealth. Like the tallest finger, we must stand tall for our families, supporting one another so that no woman ever walks alone. On this "other shore," far from the comforts of the city, we reaffirmed that our real strength lies in our communion and our shared devotion to the Risen Lord.

Before we left, I spoke to the congregation in my humble, "broken" Swahili. Though my words were simple, the warmth with which they were received gave me a new desire to speak the language of the people. After a shared meal of ugali and beans which tasted like pure grace after our climb, we contributed a small gift to the Kapkeno CWA to affirm our

unity as one family in Christ. As we navigated those "horrible" roads once more, I realized my heart had changed. I learned that to reach the "Other Shore" and experience the Risen Christ, we must be willing to travel through the "rough seas". It may be a struggle, but it is through these difficult crossings that we discover the most beautiful

and abundant life. As we move forward, these insights serve as our compass, ensuring we approach our mission in Nandi Hills with clarity, purpose, and the readiness to make a lasting impact.

**Sr. Selvathy MALACHIAS**  
Nandi Hills, Kenya



## They are our Brothers and Sisters !



***"... We share in the sorrows and joys of those who are close to us and with whom we work ..."* (Art. 85 of our Constitutions).**

We, the members of the Ouagadougou community, are delighted to share with you the experience we had on Good Friday, 3 April 2026, in the village of Sonré, Burkina Faso, with a mother abandoned by

her husband. With the catechist from our coordination group as our guide, we walked nearly 12 kilometres to meet her.

What immense joy! Our visit brought her comfort and hope: she realised she was no longer alone thanks to our sisterly presence. With simplicity and trust, she shared her situation with us: abandoned with four children - two boys and two girls - she struggles every day to provide for them, relying solely on Providence.

Despite the language barrier, nothing could stop us from listening to and comforting this sister in distress. We express our deep gratitude to Mr Bernard YANOOGO, a catechist, and to our aspirant, NIDODOGO Martine, for their invaluable help with the translation.

Our visit was a real source of comfort for this mother. Her situation is particularly precarious: she has no home and

manages to feed her family only through modest work carried out in neighbouring households. She lives essentially on the generosity of others.

At the end of this time of sharing, we offered her some gifts to help her celebrate Easter with dignity. We then prayed together, encouraging her to persevere in prayer and to remain steadfast in the faith. Coming from a Christian family - her father having been a catechist - she draws admirable strength from this spiritual heritage.

By God's grace, may we too remain attentive to the needs of those around us and show them genuine closeness through our charism. May the Risen Jesus fill us with his inner strength, so that we may be living witnesses of God's love to our brothers and sisters who are suffering.

**Sr. Fortunée NYIRAHITIMANA**  
Burkina Faso

## A Transformative journey of Love in Resurrection

As I first entered **Prem Illam** (Home of Love) the words of Jesus' "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (**Mt 25:40**), resonated deeply within me. Prem Illam welcomes physically and mentally challenged girls, and love genuinely dwells there. Through my interaction with the children, I understood their deepest need is love, conveyed by a compassionate gaze, comforting words, and a tender touch. Each time I thank God for the opportunity to be with these children and to witness their sincere and true love. I am often amazed by the way they appreciate, encourage and help one another especially those among them who need special care. Their lives have taught me that no position or talent is required to become a beacon of hope.

Spending time with these differently-abled children made it easy for me to connect with them and accept them just as they are. At times, I even try to become like a child so that they may feel comfortable and at ease with me. I teach them using different kinds of pictures, encourage them to repeat after me, and help them draw and paint, which makes their day joyful. I focus on teaching them discipline in simple ways and guide them to do their small tasks independently.

Here, I would like to share an experience through which I



truly understood the power of kindness and the meaning of rising again. One day, as I entered the campus, I noticed a girl named Lakshmi, who has an intellectual disability, sitting alone and crying bitterly. The moment she saw me, she ran towards me and hugged me tightly. She kept saying, "I want to go home," forgetting that she had no home or family other than the hostel where she had been living. I found myself at a loss for words, so I gently made her sit closer to me. This simple gesture slowly calmed her, and after some time, she began to explain what had happened. She had been corrected for her misbehaviour. With kind and gentle

words, I consoled her and showed her where she went wrong. She then took the initiative to ask forgiveness from those she had hurt and began to rebuild her relationships. This incident reminds me of the resurrection of Jesus, which renewed and strengthened the disciples. Since then, I take special care to reach out girls who sit alone, spend time listening and help them regain a new spirit.

I see my presence at Prem Illam not just as a duty, but as a sacred responsibility to be a voice for these children. Accepting their innocence, I am actively living out this mission of communion, choosing to stand with those the world often excludes. I have found that in their "weakness," they possess the greatest power to transform my heart.

In the joy of the resurrection, I feel deeply called to a process of transformation. Each day, these children invite me, through their gestures of affection and simplicity, to reshape my own life. Journeying alongside these voiceless ones, I find myself on a path of inner renewal, crossing toward the other shore while walking with the risen Christ and recognizing His face in theirs. I am deeply grateful to our Delegation for entrusting me with this ministry, where I embark on a profound inner journey that renews and strengthens my commitment to God.

**Sr.Lourd Sineha PREMKUMAR**  
India

## Golden Thread Sewing: Stitching Confidence



Situated in the Ratnapura District, the rubber estate community of Doloswala is a place marked by quiet resilience and ongoing struggle. Around 320 families live here - 185 in the rubber estate and 135 in the tea estate. Life remains challenging, as most families depend on meagre daily wages, often insufficient to meet even basic needs. Poor road conditions further isolate the village, making daily life more difficult.

During our visits, we encounter many stories shaped by perseverance. Financial hardship often places emotional strain on families; yet, amidst these difficulties, a remarkable strength continues to emerge. The mothers of Doloswala hold deep hopes for their children, longing for a future filled with dignity, opportunity, and stability.

It was in this context that the Golden Thread Sewing Project was born. Following a careful needs assessment, the urgent necessity for girls' empowerment became evident. In response, the JPIC (Justice,

Peace, and Integrity of Creation) team initiated this project to create a safe and encouraging space where young women could experience acceptance, belonging, and self-worth.

The programme was carried out with dedication by three Sisters, who took full responsibility for its implementation. With compassion and commitment, they accompanied the young women throughout the journey - guiding, motivating, and ensuring that the programme truly responded to the needs of the community.

Thirty young women joined the project with enthusiasm and commitment, successfully completing a ten-month sewing course. Over time, a quiet yet profound transformation unfolded. What began with simple stitches gradually developed into the ability to create complete garments - from pillowcases and everyday clothing to beautifully designed party frocks. Each finished piece reflected not only their newly acquired skills but also their determination and perseverance.

Beyond technical training, the project fostered personal growth and resilience. The young women were encouraged to discover their voices, recognize their dignity, and value themselves and others. By the end of the programme, they stood with renewed confidence and a clearer sense of purpose.

The completion of the course marked not an end, but a beginning. Two participants have already started their own small tailoring businesses, while others are receiving sewing orders within their estate communities. Their skills have become a source of income, enabling them to support their families and serve as role models for others.

In a setting where opportunities are limited, this initiative offers far more than vocational training - it offers hope. The Golden Thread Sewing Project has woven confidence, dignity, and new possibilities into the lives of these young women. Today, they move forward not only as skilled individuals but also as agents of change, carry-

ing the strength to shape a brighter future for themselves and their community.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated teacher who generously shared her

knowledge and skills, patiently guiding each participant with creativity and care. We also express our sincere thanks to the PBN Foundation for their generous financial support, which made this project possi-

ble. Their contribution has created a lasting impact on the lives of these young women and their families.

Unit - Colombo  
Sri Lanka



## Protection and Hope: To the other shore with the Risen Christ

With a deep sense of responsibility towards the holistic well-being of children, the Safeguarding team organized an awareness program for the students, parents, and staff of Salome Hostel, Ilavalai, and Holy Family Child Development Centre, Uruthitapuram. This initiative aimed at creating a safe, informed, and nurturing environment where children can grow in dignity, in confidence with protection.

The program began in prayer, reminding ourselves of God's presence and guidance in our efforts safeguarding every child. This was followed by a warm welcome address delivered by Sr. Violet - the Link-Councillor of the Safeguarding Team, who emphasized the importance of collective responsibility in ensuring the

safety and the formation of children.

The sessions were thoughtfully arranged to address the key aspects of 'Safeguarding'. The Introduction to Safeguarding, along with the Code of Conduct and Human Formation, helped participants to understand the moral and ethical responsibilities required in working with children. A significant part of the program focused on age-appropriate sex- education and practical ways to protect children from harm, equipping both parents and educators with essential knowledge.

Further, the session on Children's Rights, guided by the principles of the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA), highlighted the various types of abuse: physical, emotional,

sexual, and neglect, and the importance of recognizing and responding to them. Another important discussion encouraged children, to co-operate positively with parents and teachers, fostering mutual respect and understanding.

In today's digital age, the session on self-discipline, personal security, and online abuse was especially relevant. Participants were made aware of the risks children face online and were given guidance on how to ensure safer digital practices. As we look toward the future, we addressed the internal and external challenges facing our youth. Sessions on Self-Discipline and Security highlighted that true protection begins with a child's self-worth. Furthermore, in an increasingly digital age, we



provided critical awareness on Online Abuse. We taught our students how to navigate the digital landscape safely, ensuring that the "other shore" extends even into the virtual spaces they inhabit.

This entire program was not merely an academic exercise, but a deeper journey of transformation. It invited all participants to move from fear to hope, from uncertainty to confidence, and from vulnerability to protection. In this shared journey, we are called to create a space where every child feels safe, valued, and respected. It is a movement towards a more compassionate "other shore" - a place shaped

by care, responsibility, and love. By nurturing awareness and strengthening relationships, we can help children to grow in freedom and dignity, guided by values that reflect the life and light of the Risen Christ.

By working together as a community, staff, parents, and children, we continue to build a **culture of safeguarding** rooted in trust and compassion. In doing so, we become instruments of Christ's love, ensuring that every child experiences care, dignity, and fullness of life. To the "other shore" means to embody the promise of the Risen Christ, that light overcomes darkness

and safety overcomes fear. By educating our parents, empowering our staff, and listening to our children, the Salome Hostel and Holy Family Child Development Centre continue to build a bridge towards a future where every child is seen, heard, listened to and protected. As the Safeguarding Team, we move forward with the conviction that our work is a living testament to the Risen Christ's love, offering a stable ground for the next generation to flourish.

**Sr. Jeen Judesala Jude  
Jaffna, Sri Lanka**



## A story of Faith, Love and Hope

On the evening of March 6, 2026, a devastating fire broke out along NIA Road in Barangay Pinyahan, Quezon City, Philippines, turning a bustling community of urban poor into a scene of chaos and destruction. Starting at approximately 8:30 PM, the blaze rapidly spread through tightly packed structures, leading to hours of intensive firefighting operations and leaving thousands displaced in its wake. In the aftermath, authorities confirmed that 488 residential structures were destroyed, affecting 2,677 families or an estimated 7,778 individuals. Miraculously, no casualties were recorded. However, many residents lost everything they owned, including homes, personal belongings, and livelihoods, leaving them with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

**San Isidro Labrador Mission Center:** The Mission Center, a collaborative project of the Holy Family Apostolic Sisters and San Isidro Labrador Parish, was among those burned down by the fire. The day care centre was built specifi-



cally for the children of NIA. For 15 years, Sr. Goretti Peries, a Holy Family Apostolic Sister and I, a committed Lay Associate, have served and educated hundreds of children in NIA. Aside from a day care centre, it was also a venue for



our formation sessions with the Holy Family Youth and Lay Associates. It is with great sadness that we will not be able to continue our mission in this area because of this untimely incident.

**Immediate Response:** Shortly after the fire broke out, the Quezon City Local Government Unit (LGU), together with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), immediately set up evacuation centres to accommodate the displaced families. Eight evacuation centres were opened across the barangay, providing temporary shelter, food, and necessities. Among those who provided immediate assistance to the fire victims was San Isidro Labrador Parish. The Church became their temporary shelter for almost two weeks. Other parishes from the Diocese of Cubao extended their help through donations of food, mineral water, non- food items such as blankets, mats, slippers, hygiene kits and kitchen utensils. Aside from being a Holy Family Lay Associate, I am also a church volunteer at San Isidro Labrador Parish. I assisted in the repacking of rice, noodles and other canned goods and distributed them to the different evacuation centres.

**Fire Victims: Holy Family Children, Youth and Lay Associates:** Twenty-nine (29) children of our daycare/Mission Center, Fifteen (15) of our Youth-in-Formation, and Sixteen (16) of our Lay Associates-in-Formation and their families were among the fire victims. The Holy Family

Apostolic Sisters and Committed Lay Associate Members extended their help by providing necessities and financial assistance. On behalf of my co-parishioners in NIA, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all our donors, especially to our members of the Holy Family of Bordeaux. May God shower you with more blessings for your generous hearts.

**Ongoing Recovery and Challenges-** Weeks after the fire, many families are still staying in evacuation centres, while others have moved in with relatives or friends. The Quezon City Local Government Unit plans to provide transitional housing for the victims and assistance in rebuilding their homes. However, officials acknowledged that the recovery process will be a long and challenging one.

For the residents of NIA, the road to recovery will not be easy, but with the help of the government, private organisations, Parish and the community, they will remain faithful and hopeful for God's greater plan for them. They may have lost their houses, but not their spirit. They are grateful for the help they have received, and they know that with God's blessing and guidance, they will rise from this tragedy stronger than ever.

**Milgrace E. Manuel**  
Lay Associate  
Manila, Philippines