

## Intentions for prayer

**March 16** We shall pray for the Missionary Group of S. Marino, "Love without Borders" which celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Group is a most charitable one, being always available, and joyful in all its activities. We shall pray that the spirit of the Lord may always find such good people, ready to devote their life to help anyone struggling for survival, for social justice and for the respect of human rights.

"Love without Borders" was born 20 years ago as a registered Association (Onlus) in the State of S. Marino. During the eighties the Group responded to many emergencies, always acting positively to any SOS calls from Zambia. Thanks to its constant support many children's lives could be saved, and many others' were improved. Don Ottavio's charity, helped by the Group, made it possible the success of the mission to the poor. Today "Love without Borders" is a well organized association which helps a number of missions, while keeping its most important connection with the Assisi Missionary Sisters in Zambia, Brazil, Romania, Indonesia, Kenya and the Philippines. In Zambia, 6 Nutrition Centers are funded by the Group. 430 the "distance support" in various Countries.

The Michi Project offers 200 grants per year for students at college or at university. The most recent initiative regards S. Teresa Hospital (Zambia) supplying milk to undernourished children of the Pediatric section. These are just a few of the many activities of the Group which never stops improving its training program to make its work more adjoined and effective. We wish to thank the Lord for the gift of these brothers and sisters who have so effectively cooperated to reduce hunger, illiteracy and disease, giving back to thousands of deprived people their dignity and a safer life. Their freely given, constant help is also an inspiration for the Sisters who carry on the Mission to serve the poor.

May the Lord bless them and their Mission!



**April 16** Our prayer stems from the wish and commitment of the Sisters of Romania, who celebrate their III Provincial Chapter with special focus on John 15, 4.8.11: "Remain in me and I

will be with you, be my disciples and your joy will be complete". The Chapter will be held in Valea Mare, from April 24 to May 5, 2017.

The Province has 92 Sisters (with perpetual vows) and 3 Sisters (with temporary vows), 4 Sisters (from the 92) are now in the USA, 4 in Germany, 2 in Russia, 1 in Mexico and 1 in Cuba. 11 Sisters are serving at the Homes of the Curia and 2 serve in the Italian Province.

Our communities in the Province are as follows: 7 in Romania, 1 in Italy, 2 in S. Marino, 1 in Russia, 1 in Moldavia, 1 in Germany. We know the story of grace of this Province, how it has grown with much faith and sacrifice into a well rooted reality of consecrated life founded on solid rock.

Our prayer to God is: "May the faithfulness of these sisters inspire the new ones to be a fruitful gift to the Rumanian Church as well as to the universal Church".



### SUORE FRANCESCANE MISSIONARIE DI ASSISI

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**Siamo presenti:** Italia - Korea - Cina - Russia - Zambia - USA - Cuba - Malawi - Filippine - Croazia - Kenya - Romania - Messico - Moldavia - Indonesia - Argentina - Giappone - Brasile - San Marino - Germania - Vietnam.

"Risvegliate  
il mondo...  
con il Vangelo  
della gioia"

March-April  
2017



**Dear sisters, dear friends, Peace and goodness!**

Pope Francis, on the occasion of the feast of Consecrated life, offered us new reflections to help us on the journey towards a richer prophetic-missionary life, let us retrace some points together: "We do well to take up the dreams of our elders, so that we can prophesy in our day and once more encounter what originally set our hearts afire". "Dreams and prophecies together. The remembrance of how our elders, our fathers and mothers, dreamed, and the courage prophetically to carry on those dreams". "pay attention to the temptation of survival which can make our life barren, it makes us look back, to the glory days – days that are past – rather than rekindling the prophetic creativity born of our founders' dreams, it looks for shortcuts in order to evade the challenges knocking on our doors today". "Our mission – in accordance with each particular charism – reminds us that we are called to be a leaven in this dough, which in our day is that of multicultural transformation. Perhaps there are better brands of flour, but the Lord has called us to be leaven here and now, with the challenges we face. Let us accompany Jesus as he goes forth to meet his people, by taking up and carrying the crosses of our brothers and sisters; touching the wounds of Jesus in the wounds of a world in pain, which longs and cries out for healing".

The Pope entrusts the world to us once again, a world that asks for the "resurrection", which can be accomplished if we "help" Jesus to meet his people". Then it will be Easter! Best wishes!!!

## A THOUGHT FROM CUBA

by Sr. Charles Bweupe

"We have celebrated the first centennial of the apparition of our Lady of Love, the patroness of Cuba. Pope Francis came as a Missionary of Mercy. He also went to Santiago de Cuba to visit the little hamlet of Cobre with the sanctuary of our Lady of Love.

On the occasion, Pope Francis opened the Marian Year for the Cubans to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> year since the Cubans struggled to obtain independence and asked Pope Benedict XV for permission to proclaim our Lady of Love the saint patron of Cuba. Permission was granted on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1916. A hundred years have passed and, on the same day in 2016, a great celebration has been made to praise the presence of the Holy Virgin among the Cuban people

The celebration has been a double one for us, for we took the opportunity to renew our commitment to the Lord

during the solemn mass at the parish church of Matanzas. Sister Francesca was there, too.

All the congregation participated with much enthusiasm to the celebration, also in the hope that some of the girls may become new members of our religious family."



The sisters of the Cuban community along with some guys.





## OUR PRESENCE IN GERMANY

By Michael Kleeberger

On 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2011, the first three sisters from the Romanian Province arrived in Rosenheim in Baviera: Sr Christiana Pal, Sr Clara Cocianga and Sr Tatiana Burlacu, to open a community in Germany at Rosenheim near Monaco di Baviera. They were to render a service to the sick in their homes. There existed an association recognized by the Germany government as juridical board with an responsibility of helping the sick and the elderly people in their homes in order to help them live longer in their own environment so as to avoid being taken to an old people's home. The association was founded one hundred years ago by St Nicholas Parish in the city of Rosenheim and for the last ten years, the association is being directed by a catholic priest.

For many years, the hospitality service was carried out by the Franciscan Sisters of Vierzehnhelligen; but due to lack of personnel, they stopped and by 2011 the last two sisters left Rosenheim. In 2009 the director of the association, to avoid the closure of the convent, made a request to the Suore Francescane Missionarie di Assisi – Romanian Province to take over this house and apostolate. The contact was between Fr Ciprian Ban of the Romanian Franciscan Friars who was chaplain of that area. In 2010 Sr Regina Birou, the SFMA Romanian Provincial Superior went to Rosenheim to see and evaluate the situation for the possibility of sending the sisters for that precious service.

For four years now, the three sisters mentioned above have been in Rosenheim. In the first year they had to learn the German language and to obtain recognition of their professional qualifications after having passed the state examinations. Now the sisters are rendering their service to the elderly in their respective homes and families, and have become part of Rosenheim city, receiving many favours and affection from the people. I would like to quote some words from a thank you letter received by the sisters :



*"God, you personally sent these sisters ... who have always been present: morning, evening, to care and keep company to my mother; a presence full of love, patience and each morning whenever my mother saw a sister, her face brightened, even in dull days. I have seen a lot of hope and affection in the eyes of my mother whenever her eyes would meet sister's eyes. Together we have prayed, sung, laughed and wept. When receiving the anointing of the sick, a sister was present. My mother was in great pain but the presence of a sister made things lighter and was ready to meet death. It was a solemn moment.*

This witness is enough to make us understand that the presence of the sisters in Germany has been a blessing, particularly in Rosenheim. We cannot imagine a city without the sisters. There is another sister studying the German language in view of joining the community of Rosenheim.

## Will President Trump be a disgrace for the Erth climate?

The new president of the USA does not believe in climate change. This could affect the Paris Agreement (COP21) both as regards president Obama's Ecology Plan (a national plan to reduce emissions of greenhouse gas by the coal fuelled power plants) and the global ecology at large. Luckily, none of the 195 Countries who signed the Agreement can withdraw right away (we hope).

Mr. Trump may think again...

Will Mr. Trump comply with Mr. Obama's commitment to give developing Countries 730m.\$ to help them keep up the engagements of COP21?

If the Paris Agreement were not respected, the average global temperature would increase by 4°C.

With permanent effects: melting of the polar glaciers, increase of the oceans' level, long periods of drought in various parts of the Earth. The USA, as per the research projects of "Climate Interactive" are responsible for 20% of the reduction of gas emission.

During his election campaign, Trump said the problem "is some nonsense invented by the Chinese to damage American industry". Of course, his statements have no scientific ground. But his standing, clearly in favour of the oil companies, could negatively affect other Countries.

Also, the White House site has replaced the page about the commitments to avoid climate change with a new one on "A new national Energy Plan" vastly based on fossil fuels.



Moreover, Trump promised, during his election campaign, to abolish the Agency for the protection of environment (EPA)...and so forth. We wonder if Trump is going to follow in the tracks of Mr. GW Bush, who had the USA withdraw from the Kyoto Agreement in 2001. Or could he possibly follow the directions of the Obama's administration to make America great again?

We can only make a wish: "May the Lord bless our Planet!"



**Stati Uniti** - Sister Maria D'Angelo has come back to Italy for medical treatment. Sr. Maria has been a missionary for over 40 years with special care for old people and bereaved families. Her wonderful faith and dedication have marked countless people who have been directed to the Lord by her love and dedication. Thank you, dear Sr. Maria. We pray with you.

**Cina** - The leper Hospital has been completed to the immense joy of the patients who could not believe having been benefited so greatly. Unfortunately, a motorbike accident in which Sr. broke her leg spoiled the general happiness. Sr. Reginah had surgery and is convalescing: a period of rest is necessary for her full recovery.

**Indonesia** - Sr. Susanna is back to the mission after medical treatment in Korea. She has successfully "sped up" her recovery with her missionary zeal. Her many "children" needed her and her motherly heart could not let her waste time... Lots of love and good wishes, Sr. Susanna, keep up your wonderful missionary spirit!

**Padre Luigi Ruani** - Very popular father Ruani! His active, continuous cooperation goes on from this Country, always keeping his eyes and heart on the Zambian Mission. During 5 months he has organized the delivery of 3 containers with medical items for the modernization of S. Teresa Mission. He has also provided computers for a number of schools, wheelchairs for the disabled patients and a variety of items for the many needs of the Mission. Always with his great fraternal generosity.

**Cuba** - Giuliana Polverigini has returned to Cuba to carry on her mission in the Country which she feels has become her own, where many anxiously wait for her return. Pope Francis' visit brought a great religious awakening to the people of Cuba.



## THE POPE ESTABLISHES A MINISTRY FOR INTEGRAL HUMAN SERVICES

by Sr. Dolores Caneo

On 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2016, there was publication on *Motu Proprio*: Human progression” in which the Pope established a new *Ministry for the Integral Human Development Services*. Pope Francis nominated Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turson from Ghana as prefect of the Organ, who had been up to then president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

In the new Ministry, meetings were held from first of January, 2017 with the Pontifical Councils: Justice & Peace, *Cor Unum* – the ministry that coordinates and organizes humanitarian activities with help of the Holy See in case of catastrophe or crisis. In general it is about charitable activities of the Catholic Church and the entities attached to it: pastoral care to migrants and health operations.

One section of the new ministry shall be specifically for the refugees and migrants and it would be situated *AD TEMPUS*, directly under the guidance of the Pope and it would focus his particular attention to their situation.

“in all his being and actions, wrote the Pope in *Motu Proprio*, the church is called to promote the integral development of man in the light of the Gospel. Such development is actualized through care for the immeasurable good for justice, for peace, and for the safeguarding of creation.

The new ministry shall be particularly competent in matters that regard the migrants, the needy, the sick and the rejected, the marginalized and the victims of armed conflicts, and of the natural calamities; the prisoners, the unemployed and victims of all forms of slavery and torture; and other people whose dignity is at risk. It shall take care of human rights, especially those connected to work, including those of juveniles, the human trafficking, death penalty and disarmament”.

In this scope, as found in the statute, the new ministry shall offer its collaboration to the local churches; it shall favour and coordinate the initiative of catholic institutions and shall entertain relations with associations, institutes and non-governmental organizations, even outside the Catholic Church that are committed to the promotion of justice and peace. The ministry has been called to deepen the social doctrines of the Church, until it is largely diffused and interpreted in practice and its social, economic and political relations become more permeable by the spirit of the Gospel.

The commission for charity, commission for ecology and commission for sanitary operations shall be constituted close to the ministry and presided by a Prefect of the same ministry who shall be competent in such issues according to the statutes. The new organ shall assume the competence of the Holy See about the erection and vigilance of international charity associations. The organ shall be presided by the Prefect, assisted by a secretary and a sub-secretary, who could even be a lay person. The *Motu Proprio* and its relative statutes had been approved by the Holy Father on 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2016 for experimentation on proposal by the Council of Cardinals. (Vatican Radio).



Let us remember that 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2017, the World Day of Prayer, is celebrated against the draft. Each two minutes, a child is a victim of sexual harassment. In the world more than 200 million of minors are labourers, of which 73 million are less than ten years of age. Of these minors, each year, 22 000 die due to accidents at work. In the last thirty years, it is found that about 30 million children are found in slavery. Part of these dramatic data, the third World Day of Prayer and Reflection against the treatment of people shall be celebrated on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2017, which will have the theme “*they are children, Not slaves*.”

The event shall be celebrated on the liturgical memorial day of St Bhakita who experienced suffering that emanates from slavery. In attendance shall be: The international network of consecrated life against the maltreatment of people, in coordination with the ministry for consecrated life, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, the Pontifical Council for Migrants, the Academy of Vatican sciences, Caritas International, International Union for Catholic Women Associations and the Labour Groups against maltreatment, the International Union of Superiors General.



## From Russia, a presence to stay to Gagarin that God love his city ...

by Sr. Elisabeta Mirchav

With God’s help, we continue our mission, the two of us, (Sr. Cristina Ciuraru and Sr. Elisabeta Mircsov). The people here need our presence. The number of Catholics is growing, as many children are being born and consequently the number of catechumens has increased. We always keep the Church open, where the poor come to warm themselves, as a matter of fact, people in the streets flood the Church in order for them to have a piece of bread and warm themselves. They do this while praying for the benefactors, with a special prayer before the meal.

Now, we are continuing with the blessing of homes, and the people appreciate the presence of the sisters and the priest. They share their experiences of faith, their stories of the danger of the communist regime, and all that God had done through them regardless of the external

restrictions. A document from the government which places new restrictions on the entry of new missionaries in the Country, has been published, and it limits their space of activity. It seems as if the Catholic Church should not be heard of again, because it is well structured.

The Sunday celebrations are always very lively, after which tea and bread is served, especially to those people who come from far. This fosters moments of sharing, in order to create that environment which Pope Francis talks of, where everyone feels at home. The orthodox get attracted to this sense of family and they come to pray with us. The mission in Russia is of great importance to us because it is an hidden seed which, slowly sprouts in the hearts of the people, who thirst for the spirit of Christ.



The sisters live in Kaluga, the city of the astronaut who upon his return from space said that he had not met God

## A MISSION IN BRASIL

by Sr. Andreza

I narrate to you our journey from San Paolo to Maranhão. A four hours journey on a plane, in order to go to a Zone where the temperatures were reaching up to 40 degrees. Here we were able to appreciate the people’s great effort with daily missing comforts that we ourselves are used to. We travelled for more than 1000, and we met people who had witnessed their great faith to us. We found a village that was entirely built by Italians who latter offered the constructed small houses to the poorest. We went to a small village, called san Giuliano, which is about 70 kilometers from the city of PICOS. That’s where we had the inter-congregational meeting, which was attended by various institutes, where we took part at a vocational exhibition in which about 150 youths participated. We were given an opportunity to talk about Consecrated life, our charism and our presence in the various parts of the world. The youths asked us many questions and took our addresses, from then, two girls have been in touch with us.

We were able to visit other villages, where we could meet youths and adults in the evening. They all participated with interest. Thereafter, we returned to Caxias, so that we could set off again to visit other two villages which were quiet far. Even here, we noticed a lot of poverty and great faith, they gave us a warm and interesting welcome, and asked many questions. We also had moments of intense prayer. In conclusion, we organised the itinerant missionary Rosary for their village’s paths. And finally, after so many visits and meetings with women and reflections with groups, we concluded our mission in a place near the community of the sisters, always with children, youths and adults. Sister Cida made a very good lecture/conference. We concluded the meeting with a walk in prayer, feasting with joy. Even the Church of Nostra Signora di Nazaret, was crowded. It was really an experience of God in our lives. Closing with a cheerful community dinner, we thanked God!!!





## NEWS FROM THE NURSING HOME "CLARA" IN SOUTH KOREA

by Sr. Pia Kim

In this house there are three elderly guests, who share everything, and since we are with them the whole day, we intentionally imitate their gestures, the same words, identifying ourselves with them, imitating their way of laughing, of getting angry, of expressing sentiments of joy and of sadness...

The eldest is called Giulia, 91 years old, she takes good care of her health, the way of dressing and she participates a lot in family life, and she doesn't look her age. The other one is called Teresa, her memory is quite poor and she laughs at herself because of this condition, saying that she has become thick-headed: they like each other. Our day-to-day life is quite simple. The old people don't sleep much, they wake up early, they pray, they do exercises to loosen their muscles, and to overcome arthritis and stiffness of the body. After lunch, which comprises of healthy foods, they go for a walk in order to avoid an increase in the cholesterol levels and diabetes. Everything possible is done in order to give them a healthy and serene life. In order to preserve the memory, we do an activity of choosing colours, using different designs with a felt-tip pen, knitting etc. At 15:00 hours they say the rosary for their families and for the benefactors.

Every Tuesday we go to the market to buy food for tea break, then we go window shopping in the shops while they do their personal shopping like clothes etc.

What they like most is getting on the car to go for Mass and lighting a candle for the Madonna. Our greatest desire is to make these dear grandmothers feel good to be around us, by making them feel loved and happy.

Long live dear grandmothers: we love you...



Photo  
From  
Japan

SCHOOL  
JAPANESE  
LANGUAGE  
THAT THE  
SISTERS OFFER  
IMMIGRANTS  
TO  
SINCE MANY  
YEARS.

## POPE FRANCIS MEETS THE LUTHERANS IN LUND (SWEDEN).

by Sr. Bernaveta Ciobanu

Pope Francis visited Lund (Sweden) from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016, for the commemoration of 500 years since the beginning of the Reformation, according to Cardinal Koch *"even though he was welcomed with gratitude, he aroused criticism and opposition. While on the part of the Catholics, they feared a protestant drift of Catholicism, while the Protestants talk of the betrayal of the Reformation. On the contrary, the commemoration of this anniversary presents itself to both parties, as a joyful invitation to dialogue over what the Catholics can learn from the reformation and on what the protestants can draw from the Catholic Church as an enrichment for their faith, by overcoming every factious and polemic tone"*

The meeting reasserted once again the publication of the theses or disputation on the power of indulgences made on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1517 "must not be seen as the beginning of the reformation which led to the division of the unity of the Church, neither should it be considered as a revolutionary document". Martin Luther "did not absolutely want to neither breakaway from the Catholic Church nor establish a new church, what he had in mind was the renewal of Christianity in its entirety in the spirit of the Gospel".

The fact that his idea of reformation could not be accomplished, to a greater extent was due to political factors. The real aim of the reformation that was started by Luther was the renewal of the entire Church, for which the division, the birth of the protestant church and the separation of the ecclesial protestant community from the Catholic Church, must be considered not as a positive consequence of the reformation, but as an expression of its provisional failure.

The commemoration that is expected on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017 should therefore be understood "as an invitation to return to Martin Luther's original concern" in the light of the three key concepts. The first one is gratitude for the past 50 years of intense dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans which led to the *joint Declaration on the doctrine of justification* which was signed on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1999 in Augsburg. The second is that "we cannot resign ourselves to the distance and the distance that the separation has brought forth between us", as Pope Francis said word for word during the international ecumenical celebration of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016 as an initial act of the common commemoration of the reformation, in 2017. The third is that Catholics and Lutherans have started journeying together on the way to reconciliation. Now, in the common commemoration of the Reformation of this year, there is an opportunity to make a common journey, which has been formed in the last 50 years in the ecumenical dialogue between the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church. In the Lutheran evangelical cathedral of Lund, southern part of Sweden, where the Lutheran World Federation was founded in 1947, the holy Father commemorated the beginning of the Reformation together with Bishop Munib Younan and Reverend Martin Junge, in the presence of other partners in the dialogue between the Catholics and Lutherans, who were represented by members of the Conference of secretaries Christian communions worldwide from all over the world. "We have the possibility – the Pope said – of repairing a crucial moment in our history, overcoming controversies and misunderstandings which have often prevented us from understanding each other. For the first time in history, a centenary of the reformation of Martin Luther was commemorated by Catholics and protestants internationally, in ecumenical communion".

On the question that emerges often times, which is, if the reformation is an occasion for celebrating or, on the contrary, of affliction, the prayer meeting in Lund offered a convincing response. The steps that have been accomplished towards each other mark an irreversible journey: that which unites the two Churches in prayer, on the journey of faith and in the doctrinal contents is much more than that which still divides them. The official ecumenical dialogue between Lutherans and Catholics in these 50 years of its existence, can rejoice at the various convergences which it has rediscovered and expressed in a renewed manner.

