

Dearest Sisters and Friends, Peace and Joy!

We are celebrating the missionary Day in our Institute, on September 7, and we want it to be celebrated in the most heart-felt way, involving people who are close to us, to our mission, and those whom the Lord entrusted us. It is a day to spend in prayer, fasting and charity, perhaps inviting some poor to our table, or making a gesture of solidarity.

To better live the Day, the community of Longiano bestows an evangelical testimony on us — a proof of a new forward-looking form of life, with the commitment of a present time to be lived in response to the signs of the times, that require an open and renewed life, which will cope, in an evangelical way, with new challenges that touch many a life. Sisters juniors as well, since they have prepared for the final Profession of vows in Assisi, can bestow some thoughts that make us feel how alive the missionary spirit is among us. Sr. Redenta, a lifetime Missionary from Brazil, shares her experience between her people.

Good luck, then, Happy Day in preparation for the big Celebration of the Nativity of Mary, Mother and Patron Saint of ours.

Sr. M. Rosalinda

### THOUGHTS OF SOME SISTERS JUNIORS ...



Chinese Sister – "I'm trying to have a better knowledge and understanding of the modern-day socio-politic and religious world. Together, we try our best to get to know poor and helpless people, in the spirit of the Christian social doctrine, for a justice concerning not only human being but also the nature, working on ecology".

Kenyan Sister – "In this time of liberalism and consumerism, many are the challenges for those believing in the Gospel, hence it is necessary to be competent and to be able to conduct a dialogue, an open dialogue about culture and the many religions, in order to build a more harmonized

world. It is necessary to know and respect the different cultures, for an evangelization which become incarnate. The debate about Lord's Commandments should lead us to a moral order, that is at the heart of any life and social group; this calls for a change in evangelical approaches, to "reach out".

I'm happy to be part of a Congregation that has been missionary for generations, and that offers us an opportunity to fully live that specific call from Jesus: "Go into the world ...".

**Zambian Sister** – I see the presence of Franciscan Sisters of Assisi as a light that glows in sight, like a beacon on the walk of humanity. In a world scarred by injustice, corruption and poverty, the mere presence of SFMA's is a hopeful sign, expressed in the humble service of the last ones. I think that we have to nurture the passion for sharing the Mission of Jesus, with a heart that's willing to witness His life".

Indonesian Sister – I sense that is a big challenge to be a missionary, to get over my shyness, to be willing to know, and to experience gratuitousness, and to really feel free to fly over further lands. I'm happy to be a Missionary Franciscan Sister in Assisi; after experimenting the beauty of living with missionary Sisters, come from other Countries, I want to give myself, too. I'm longing to be set to go, with a happy heart, when Congregation calls me to.

I trust that Congregation SFMA maintains the characteristics of simplicity, collaboration and patience, to sow and let the other reap.

**Zambian Sister** – "Our SFMA mission is in continuity with the mission of Christ, who keeps on sending us everywhere so that we introduce Him and take people on as His disciples in all parts of the world. Our mission is significant nowadays, when an evangelical incarnation is to be found, and that has to respect the cultures from which we are from. It is plain that the specificity of our mission is to give a voice to those who have not, sharing the spirit of Beatitudes with everyone.

The openness to further ways of evangelization, following the path of the Church, with a deep knowledge of the Documents produced in different times, allows us to put our feet on safe places, where God can dispose of us. And, as was the case with the first missionary sisters, we will find that evangelization becomes attraction and innovation of life, with only one reference: Christ".

#### BRAZIL – Sr. Redenta tells us ...



"Do not come any closer! Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Exodus 3,5)

"Drug use is a large problem, anywhere. Drug draws youth and adults, destroying their lives, destabilizing families and society.

The term "drug" is popularly limited to illegal drugs, but we know well that there are other dependencies, such as on alcohol, on cigarettes, on gambling, that are not illegal, but often irremediable. This assumption today has visibility for its dimensions, since it involves loan sharks, it results in violence, and en-

courages illegal trade. It is a well-known fact that those who do drugs become victim, lose willpower, and become servant. Very often, it all starts from the curiosity of "trying", then it takes one's life, maybe not by choice anymore. The majority that are affected are the younger ones, whose parents cannot tolerate an addicted child and they suffer by asking themselves what they did wrong. All the family suffers – brothers, sisters, relatives – because everyone feels affected and involved; their life changes and their efforts are intended to try to rescue the child, and so the normal family life is failing. Everything seems to depend on the condition of that needy child. To help a child, many people of our area take part in the meetings of AMORE ESIGENTE (F.A.E.) group, founded by a Jesuit priest, in the USA. He brought this gift to Brazil. The community is a place of welcome, brotherhood, sympathy and great calmness, where people feel recognized as such. Here, social status, religion, financial position and race do not matter: it is a holy place, full of love, of mercy, where people feel loved, understood and respected, while recognizing that chemical dependence has no cure, that it has to be checked, followed, in order to strike a balance by good guidelines and schedules to keep, and being confident in mutual aid. F.A.E. helps families to reorganize, and patients to regain self-respect, to return safely to community. The results are good and they are often worth all the hard work, but, first of all, make young people return to society. We cooperate, too, in many ways, especially by our presence, by listening, praying a lot – our prayer that wants to meet those who cannot help themselves, so that in God they can find peace.

I thank the Lord who allows me to take forward my mission in Brazil, also having this experience of sympathy with wounded humanity.

# THE CHARISMS ARE RENEWED BECAUSE THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT: HERE ONE TESTIMONY THAT COMES FROM THE COMMUNITY OF LONGIANO

Dear Sisters! I would like to share with you how we – sisters, brothers and the many laymen who are near to us and hang out with us – are living here in Longiano.

The situation, over the years, has been evolving into activities that, thank the Lord, have consoli-



dated and grown. Behind everything, I am keen to say there is an experience of fraternity shared by brothers and laymen, and both have respect for each other's community gatherings. The context is the family relationships', with brothers and sisters sharing, most importantly, their consecration, guarded by the "Master of the house", the Holiest Crucifix, to whom people are much devoted.

Our community of brothers and sisters meets every day at the Sanctuary: for the Holy Mass, fol-

lowed up by Lauds; at noon, for the Office of readings and the Little Hours, and, in the evening, for Vespers, followed up by a little Eucharistic adoration. Laymen, too, join us during these moments of prayer, time permitting; some of them, Tertiary ones and young families, live in a wing of the convent. Throughout the liturgical year, each Monday evening, one hour is dedicated to Eucharistic adoration, led, alternatively, by brothers, sisters and laymen. Our two religious communities meet a few times a year, on the occasion of "tempi forti" (Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter, and Pentecost), for a day of community retreat, outside Longiano, and, when celebrating, on the occasion of lunchtime, too. We also meet families from Casa Betania, some times of year, to dine all together at their home. One of the most beautiful moments is on January 6, when we're having Vespers together: we bless all over the place, including everyone's rooms, then we have the Rite of Extraction of Saints, and we dine, accepting what each one takes for sharing, and we play together in simplicity.

From rhythmical life, from the many moments of prayer and expanded fraternity, comes the nourishment and the strength to live the various apostolic activities in response to the many requests, sometimes not even programmed. For us, those ones are a sign of Jesus' call, and our receptiveness is to give substance and practical effect to our consecration and mission. Indeed, many people come here, expecting a meeting to give them light, strength and encouragement. Many people who, in this place, developed, especially for starting a family, have promoted other

groups in their territories of departure. This gives us true joy.

I enumerate only the groups connected with the Sanctuary: "Arciconfraternita del Santissimo Crocifisso", OFS, "Associazione Homo Viator – for the increasing humanity –", families from Casa Betania, fiancé group, newlyweds' group, families' group, "Scuola della Parola", youth group, Scouts, Choir, "Villaggio San Francesco", "Raggio di sole". They are a plenty,



15 groups if we count the two religious' fraternities.

OFS group with sisters

There is also the inclusion of sisters in Diocese: one to lead the diocesan group, for divorced ones, and one included in the group "Servizio Diocesano di Animazione Spirituale" (SEDAS).

The eldest sisters are busy caring for elderly people, both in Parish, and in a nursing home. One of them also helps in parish Caritas, once or twice a month.

Beside our convent, there are also two apartments: one is inhabited by a couple of Nigerian immigrants, whom we are guiding into integration, by our laundry service for the Sanctuary, and by the conservation of the outside areas surrounding the convent. In the other apartment, three di-



vorced men, who had got into serious difficulties, were gathered. The project has been designed by friars, in cooperation with municipalities and with two associations.

A real chance to give oneself and to realize that man is made to walk, get back up, and grow! Let's thank the Lord deeply!

The strengthening of many groups leads us to schedule, in some periods of the year, some meetings that we have called "of expanded pastoral care", engaging contact points from each group. It

was very important, indeed, to foster the feeling of belonging to the Sanctuary, and, most of all, the communion among the various groups, to avoid fragmentation and scattering. We have also thought about planning two beautiful moments, that we replicate every year: the beginning of the liturgical year with all the groups, to ask the Lord for his presence and to guide us throughout the year, and the ending of activities, to thank the Lord for what he donated us to live, to feed with good values, to grow, to understand. Two beautiful moments we live with the Holy Mass, and then a moment of conviviality all together. This year, on June 10, we spent the day on the lawn in front of the convent: each group introduced, in a brief and nice way, the progress made, then it was lunch, with a picnic, and games until evening. It's all about simple things, but those simple things really unite, and allow to know each other, to develop genuine relationships.

#### How do we work here?

Each group is backed up by a specific team, composed by a friar, a nun, a family, and by some laymen. The preparation for the meetings is made together all the months, in order for the meetings themselves to be always chaired by someone else, each one having its share, in a true fair cooperation, and benefiting from the treasure all the kinds of vocations provide. A true God's grace and a big enrichment for us! As sisters, we are included in OFS, in "fiancé group", in "newlyweds' group", in youth group, in Scouts', in the choir's, and in "Associazione Homo Viator – for the increasing humanity –", with young people and children; with the latter ones, this year, we are helping with the day camp, lasting about two months.



The children in the cloister

Lastly, there is the new "Raggio di sole" group. It is a project that some laymen, hanging out with the groups, were carrying in their hearts for some time – the strong desire to express their gratitude by giving back, to those in need, the much they have received here, the much that, for them, has represented a further boost – a light – salvation.

We couldn't keep ourselves from responding to their delicate, yet insistent, request to be backed up, in this project, by us – brothers and sisters – and so, together, we thought and wrote up a plan that has been accepted by Provincial superior, with his committee.

Why "Raggio di sole" ("Ray of Sun")?

I report some sentences by which one friend of ours, wife and mother, a component of the team, introduced the Project to the various groups:

"St. Francis honored creatures and, especially, Brother Sun, and he wrote: "A little ray of sun is enough to wipe out many shadows. That's why we can be a little part, with a gesture that can wipe out many shadows, brightening with a light that's not ours". [...]

"We would like to share what the Spirit, in this time, inspired in the heart of many of us. Why, here in Longiano, is a new project needed, when there's already a plenty of groups, associations, etc ...? As this project took shape, we realized that it wasn't anything new, but it is, basically, a way to put a face and a stronger connection to what is already existing. [...]. If we take a look at 360-degree family, we can embrace a bit of everything, from the couple to children, down to the young people and to elders, because each of us is born from a family, and, if the family is healthy, but especially supported/backed up, a child will grow safe, and they will be a safe man/woman. [...]"

So, the Project involved having in the Sanctuary, and in the annexes, a meeting place for the family with its needs. A place where those who have something can donate, and those, who don't, can come and obtain.

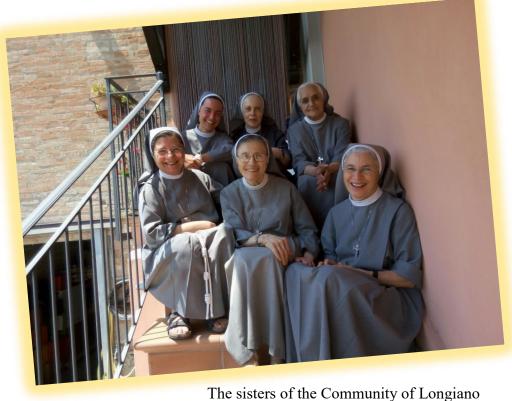
Our friend also says: "You start from what is already there, structuring and organizing it in order for teamwork to be, in order to become "church" not only by words, but giving ourselves and our gifts, with our life, donating and making ourselves active witnesses of what this place can become in the long term. A meeting place with Father, with brother, a place where listening, a place from which you can receive, but in which you can also give. [...].

For now, the first two years have been planned: training events for families, extended to Diocese, too; in the summertime, a camp for families; a week for families to live here together, in our spaces; some prayer moments, in two different parishes of the territory, and engaging children, too. The experience of Sundays spent in the break room has already started. The break room, the center for youth, once a month, becomes a meeting place for families themselves. Sundays planned and chaired by the two-family groups, already tested successfully, are a condition for meeting in a suitable place and for giving an alternative to "shopping centers", where, very often, people find shelter on winter Sundays. For this reason, we are thinking about extending the proposal, keeping the places open all Sundays.

Obviously, besides this, there are also many other projects and dreams that can come true when the renovation of the second-floor rooms of the convent will be concluded. It will be possible, then, to work and to accept couples living difficult situations, with experts to help them, and by creating networks with the territory; accepting groups of families; scheduling days of spiritual training; scheduling meetings for those who are mourning, etc.".

We, sisters, are immersed in this "overabundance of life", we are part of it, every of us with their own gifts, and for this we bless the Lord. In this situation, we feel in charge to witness a Religious Life that has to be authentic. For this reason, we aim for the instruments we have, in order for our fraternal life to always be in a constant path of growth. We regularly live the meetings, the monthly retreat, the many moments of prayer, in communion, day by day, and the sharing of the Word, thanks to the drawing of the community Project, without which the risk of scattering would be very high.

We benefit, especially, from each other's work, talking, at the table, about our respective experiences, lived outside of the convent. Among ourselves, we try to accept our weaknesses as chances of mutual conversion. Sometimes we do best, other times we need to strive more, but then the meetings, that we regularly have outside home, fill our hearts with joy and cheer us up to pursue the path. For this, we can say that we are very supported by prayer and by our mission. Indeed, all of us know the Lord works on our weaknesses, and, most of all, he doesn't stop at them, but he keeps on blessing us with His constant call!



Sister Emilia Miraglia

bears fruit.

So, we thank the Lord for the work he does in those who, passionately,

without being afraid of doing it, never staying. The families who give their whole life, while working, taking care of their children and of the couple itself, often studying to keep themselves updated, witness that we can really say the giving of oneself always

donate

themselves,

## From Padua, a new cooperation in the most beautiful friendship ...

We already know Gennaro Pezone and his brothers Ciro and Giuseppe, busy being present, in a simple but active way, in the various parishes of the Diocese of Padua, where the good cooperation of many priests allows this missionary presence to be, one Sunday a year. The benefits are very inspiring, so much so that funds serve to support a Nutritional Center with over 200 orphan children, undernourished or starving. The help extends to a new kindergarten, standing next to the Nutritional Center and to the Popular School, which houses hundreds of children, in the shantytown "Chipata", in Kitwe, Zambia. From this initiative, many people join the "Sostegno a distanza" project, thus increasing the number of

orphans whose life changes, thanks to this help. It was possible to do this through various contributions for small projects developed in other Countries.

Once a year, a travel to Assisi is organized, with people wishing to go see St. Francis' Church and to get to know each other better. A priest comes along with them, more often Don Mirko, who sets the tone and gives beauty to these travels. "Many elected souls will come to you", these words are by St. Francis blessing Assisi and, actually, people coming to Assisi on a pilgrimage,



these friends from Padua, are men and women amazingly open, very interested in knowing Francis' paths, Mission life, needs and emergences. It is like spending time with old friends, who have left the conversation open and now they are ready to continue it.

On the last pilgrimage, in June, we have been talking quite a bit about the needs of "Chipata" shanty-town, where the only reference point are the aforementioned parish activities. They shared their concern for the school situation, where, in a 36sq classroom 78 children study, and in the other classrooms there are no less. In the same school, children study Information Technology (obligatory subject) from photocopied pages, and they have never seen a computer. It was necessary, for many students, to be given a

A moment in Cascia

meal a day, because, instead of studying, they were sleeping from hunger and because of exhaustion.

This is one of those situations that our friends from Padua embrace. This makes us feel stronger because we are not the only ones seeing and taking the trouble of the have-nots, and of the children who are both motherless and fatherless.

Our most heart-felt thank to the priest from Padua, and to the many people who are friendly and sympathetic, joyful in the manner that, Pope Francis says, "is sign of the successful evangelization".

A note about the request by Sr. Godfridah for help to build at least two rooms for children from VIII and IX classes, who cannot study in too small spaces anymore; € 12.000,00 are needed.



**September 16**<sup>th</sup> – Let's pray for all the lifetime missionary Sisters, so that giving themselves completely become always more excitement for evangelical life for many brothers and sisters thirsty for God's Word, and in need of meeting Christ. The Lord allow them to be able to sow freely, always, knowing that other will reap.

Who are the lifetime missionary Sisters? They are many, and they live in the USA, in Brazil, in Cuba, Mexico, Zambia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Japan. They are Sisters who heard the call to leave their own Country, in order to become citizens of other Countries, making the culture of other people their own, fitting in with the ways of life of the new land, learning to know manners and ways to spread the Gospel that incorporate a specific mindset. But what characterizes the lifetime missionaries is gratuitousness: they leave without time or service constraints, without calculating the gift they want their life to be, without place limits in becoming "incarnation of the Gospel" so that other have life and have it aplenty. They are Sisters who decided, in their heart, to want to follow the Father anywhere He takes them.

October 16<sup>th</sup> – Our prayer ascends for the many Collaborators who make our mission among the poor possible and more inspiring. Their charity become blessing for their family, seed of hope for poor, and seed of evangelical life for many.

Many are the people who are close to us and share our mission, pretty much everywhere, where we are present. It would be great to know all the friends, their deeds, to really experience the friendship, but we know that is not possible except in the reality of mystic Body, where distances do not exist. We know that, by helping a Sister or a Community, in their mission, they help all of us. Yes, they help us through the service, with financial means and goods, but, first of all, they teach us to live and to give freely.

# WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE CARE OF CREATION 1st of September 2018

"Grow the alliance with the earth"

Let's celebrate this Day reflecting on the encyclical Laudato si', providing a gesture that has to be a preventive action, facing the effects of climate change (it can be rescuing a plant). Bishops advise to "work to regain the connection between the care of territory and of the people, and guide towards new lifestyles and responsible consumption". Every of us can do something about it!!!



Assisi – Casa Madre gained special members: a little family of Eritrean refugees, through the "Corridoio umanitario" project. It is about a mother with three wonderful children who do not need to speak to express their joy. They found dozens of mothers, but we found four "gems".

**Kenya** – A School in Hurara, in Malindi's mission, was necessary. Some friends from the Mission gave the money it took to build it and, pretty soon, the external structure of the school, dedicated to the parents of two of the sponsors, has already been built, and the whole building will be ready for the new school year.

Zambia – After building "Casa Mamma Antonia" in Malindi, the chapel in Indonesia, the chapel in Ndeke, Zambia, now Piovan family is building another "Casa Mamma Antonia" in Solwezi, Zambia. It has always been a Missionary family.

Assisi – Two Sisters from Croatia arrived in Casa Madre, to offer their service. The community is truly international and varied, because the Sisters are from eight different countries: a human-cultural treasure that makes the community more beautiful.

Malawi – A new twinning is born between the missionary group SS Annunziata, from Cagliari, and Natenje mission, in Malawi. The commitment of the sisters ensures the school to over one-hundred children, who couldn't attend it without a help from outside. The group keeps on working tirelessly and magnificently in other Countries too.