

tic artist in front of the historic Church of the “Lord of the Cross,” said by itself that the Word had come out from the Church and was being offered at the crossroads of people’s concrete daily lives.

During this week four Conferences were given by Bible experts in the amphitheatre lounge of the Town Hall, where the civic affairs of citizens were conducted. These talks were meant to answer questions people ask about the Bible.

One day was spent in the café of a shopping centre that was also in the city centre, during which the Word was presented at table in friendly conversations. The young people had their own input with a dramatization of the Book of Job, this time in a Church, to reflect the sufferings in life today.



The Biblical Week in the public square that had begun on a Sunday was closed the following Sunday with a procession with a Bible opened and proclaimed from a big float: the reading of the first pages of Genesis, as it was passing through the streets followed the acting out of a few pages from the Gospel. The procession finally ended at the parish Church where the Eucharist brought this Biblical Week to a close.

Maria Celeste Lúcio, fmm

India/Coimbatore - “Doctor of Excellence” award for Sr. Premila Jaddu

After completing her MBBS and MS at St. John’s Medical College Bangalore, Sr. Pramila Jaddu joined the Resident Medical Officers at Immaculate Conception Convent Hospital on September 1st 2007.

“In nothing do men more merrily approach the gods, than in giving health to humanity.” Cicero

Pramila says, that these words of Cicero reminded her once again of the responsibility of safe-guarding ‘Life’ as she was told when she received the “Doctor of Excellence” award in 2010.

KG Hospitals Private Ltd. is renowned among pioneer institutions at Coimbatore. Once in two years they confer ‘Doctor of Excellence’ award to 50 efficient doctors from all over Tamil Nadu, South India. A doctor is selected for this award according to the following criteria: she/he has the best professional experience and skills; she is rated ‘excellent’ in patient care by the patients and doctors; she has been actively and efficiently engaged in rural health programs and has reached out to the maximum number of the poor and the neglected.



G. Bakhavathsalam Presenting “Doctor of Excellence” Award to Dr. Sr. Pramila

Within a span of three years, Sr. Pramila has reached out to thousands of under privileged women and children in 10 villages around Coimbatore and in the tribal villages of Mulli and Doddapuram (our Fraternities). Our regular medical camps and programs aim at an integral and holistic health of these less fortunate women and children.

4th July 2010 was a D' day for Sr. Pramila and the ICC Hospital as a whole. The awarding ceremony was held at G. D. Naidu auditorium, Coimbatore. The hall was packed to the full with hundreds of doctors and thousands of well wishers. While giving the award to Sr. Pramila, Dr. Bakthavthsalam, the chairman of the KG Hospitals, appreciated her for her continued and selfless service to the poor in the church and in ICC Hospital.

As a medical practitioner and surgeon, Sr. Pramila is exposed daily to the miseries of thousands of people. As such she says, "Encountering them in their vulnerability deepens my faith and dependency on the providence of God. The words of our Constitutions echo in me 'The Christ whom we contemplate sends us out to our brothers and sisters,... they in turn send us back to the contemplation of Christ'." Const.no.3

Katherina Thattil, fmm

Humility of St. Francis:

(Francis' encounter with the farmer Paolo)

(Paolo) "Good morning!" he called out, seeing the two Brothers.

"Good morning to you, Paolo," answered Leo, who recognized him immediately.

"It is always a pleasure to meet the Brothers," said the farmer, halting his oxen.

"Are you on your way to the village, Paolo?" asked Leo.

"Oh! Yes, I have to go," answered the farmer, shrugging his shoulders. "My oxen need to be shod; my cart needs to be repaired, and then," he added with a sprightly and knowing air, "there is Paolo, too, who needs a small sip of good wine."

This declaration from someone so guileless and good natured amused Francis, who laughed aloud.

"Well, go then, Paolo," he said. "That is fine. You are at least honest. A small sip of good wine cannot hurt you. But beware! Be careful. You must not multiply those sips too much."

The farmer laughed with a light heart; then suddenly staring at Francis, he assumed a grave aspect.

Aren't you Brother Francis?" he asked. "The Brothers from the hermitage who came to our house collecting told us that Brother Francis was now living with them up there on the mountain."

"I am," answered Francis simply.

"Well," said the farmer in an almost confidential tone, patting him in a friendly way on the shoulder, "try to be as good as they say you are. Many people have put their trust in you – don't let them down."

"God alone is good, Paolo," answered Francis. "For me, I am only a sinner. Listen carefully, dear friend. If the worst of rogues had received as much grace as I have, he would have overtaken me in holiness by a hundred laps." ...

Extract from "Wisdom of the Poverello", by Eloi Leclerc, translated by Marie-Louise Johnson.
Copyright 1961 and 1989, pages 54-55





PRAYER OF HOPE FOR THE WORLD

A modern version of the Peace Prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi.

We come to you, o God, in our need; create in us an awareness of the massive and seemingly irreversible proportions of the crisis we face today and a sense of urgency to activate the forces of goodness.

Where there is blatant nationalism, let there be a global, universal concern;

Where there is war and armed conflict, let there be negotiations;

Where there is stockpiling, let there be disarmament;

Where people struggle for liberation, let there be non-interference;

Where there is consumerism, let there be care to preserve the earth's resources;

Where there is abundance, let there be a choice for a simple lifestyle and sharing;

Where there is reliance on external activism, let there be a balance of prayerful dependence on you, o God;

Where there is selfish individualism, let there be openness to community;

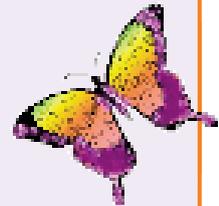
Where there is the sin of injustice, let there be acceptance of responsibility, confession and atonement;

Where there is paralysis and numbness before the enormity of problems, let there be confidence in working together;

O God, let us not be so much concerned to be cared for as to care, not so much be materially secure as to know that we are loved by You;

Let us not look to be served but to place ourselves at the service of others, whatever the cost to self-interest, for it is in loving vulnerability that we, like Jesus, experience the fullness of what it means to be human

And it is serving that we discover the healing springs of life that will bring about a new birth to our earth and hope to our world. Amen. Amen.



Acknowledgement and thanks to Scarborough Missions.

Partners in Mission

“Where are you leading me?” (Mary of the Passion’s retreat notes of 1884) Many of Mary of the Passion’s most beautiful writings were penned during 1884 -1885, the time when she was obliged to stand aside as leader and spiritual guide of our newly founded institute and its future was so unsure. For her it was not only a time of pain but also one of prolonged prayer; a time of mystical insight into the true and lasting power of truth and love, She surrendered herself to live only in the beauty of such power and to follow wherever it was leading her.

“Where are you leading us?” Today the FMM in Australia are living the same question. Like our sisters in Europe we live with an ageing population in which the vocation to religious life is chosen by very few. The majority of our members are gradually celebrating their Golden Jubilees and although this does not mean they have retired, it does mean that the future is not theirs’ to shape but in the hands of a small number of younger FMM and the dedicated laity who have caught the spirit of Helene de Chappotin and are furthering it in the institutions that the FMM have confided to them.

It is my great joy as one of the first generation of Australian FMM to be intimately connected with two such institutions in Melbourne: Our Lady of Nativity Primary School and Ave Maria College located side by side in West Essendon, Melbourne.

As a young sister I was appointed to the Ave Maria Retreat House in Essendon and for eleven years I was involved in the apostolic services that resulted from the rapid population increase in our immediate neighbourhood. These services included a year by year building and staffing of a kindergarten, followed by a parish primary school and a girl’s secondary college. I was personally involved in the very tentative and shoe-string beginnings of the kindergarten and pri-

mary school. Tentative because of the newness of the venture for FMM in Australia and shoe-string because of the financial demands on us and on the young families moving into the area. Yet these two limitations became our real strength: we knew we needed each other to make the dream of a parish centre with full educational facilities become a reality. The parents formed themselves into all kinds of working bees to clear the grounds, build equipment, and organize fund raising events. Those with teaching, craft or sporting experience freely gave time to enriching the

school program. Those with transport gladly shared it with others. A tradition of Franciscan joy, sharing, and service took root without anyone ever deliberately naming or claiming it and by 1965 a parish church, kindergarten, primary school and secondary college were functioning.

In 1978 the FMM withdrew from Essendon. The Ave Maria Convent and Retreat House ultimately became the college administration centre. I returned to Melbourne in 1994 and was delighted soon after to receive an invitation to a staff meeting at Ave Maria College for a review of the College Mission Statement to see if the founding charism of the FMM was still alive in the directions being taken in the college under the new leadership of Ms Olwen Horton.



Ave Maria Retreat House for Women, Essendon, conducted by the FMM 1945 – 1978

This renewed contact has become an ongoing informal involvement in the life of the College and many rewarding experiences of its wholehearted ownership of the FMM charism. The most recent happened at the 2009 awards ceremony when I was asked to present the new Helene de Chappotin Award for Excellence to the student who throughout the year had demonstrated “exceptional commitment to the dimensions of the College mission statement: Faith, Caring and Learning.”

In his introduction Mr Heinz Wolf, Director of Faith and Religious Education, described the award:

“This award symbolises the motto 'striving for truth through love'. The recipient of this award understands what inspires her to be faithful to our Catholic tradition; to persevere in the face of adversity; to respond creatively to those in need around us; and to be hopeful, resilient and courageous in moving forward in the presence of Jesus.

The criteria for this award are as follows:

- Academic Effort
- Participation in Faith and Social Justice activities
- Display of Leadership Qualities
- Membership in groups operating within the college
- General commitment and support of the charism and spirit of Helene de Chappotin”

Stephanie Mulcahy was the chosen recipient. The applause that accompanied the award and the joy on Stephanie’s face told me how right the choice.

Our Lady of Nativity Primary school radiates the same joyous Franciscan spirit.

On October 9, 2009, the children, staff and parents, gathered in the parish church for the inauguration and unveiling of banners of four new school houses. Each child is a member of one of the houses and thereby connected through various activities and responsibilities with students other than his or her classmates. This gives a sense of community and belonging much wider than is found within one’s peer group. The following is taken from an account of the ceremony in the 2009 School Year Book,

“The symbols on the banners represent the founding of our school by the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.

At the top of each banner the FMM Cross reminds us of our beginnings and of God’s love for each of us. Each individual banner contains one of four symbols further representing our Franciscan origins. These symbols are also found in a mosaic at the entrance to our school:

Blue - Sister Water is a symbol of renewal, healing and inspiration

Gold - Sister Moon is a light in darkness, a symbol of peace, justice and creation



The four banners that honour the history and Franciscan identity of Our Lady of Nativity Parish School

Red - Brother Sun is the symbol of warmth, hospitality and connection

Green - Mother Earth is our home, a symbol of action, of being grounded.”

I was taken completely by surprise when I read my name on the Gold Banner of Sister Moon. As the first FMM principal I had been chosen as one of the patrons and I share this honour with St Francis, Fr James Wall, the first parish priest, and Fr John Spillane, a much loved pastor of 20 years. Joy, gratitude and sheer delight in how God has faithfully tended those small beginnings welled up in my heart.

In gratitude to these devoted partners in mission, the staff and students of Our Lady of Nativity school and



Members of Gold House with their house patron

Ave Maria College, I confidently offer the same encouraging words that a former general superior, Sr Alma Dufault, spoke to the whole institute of FMM: “... receive the heritage of the Institute, always improving upon it, making it more fruitful, renewing it to meet the needs of our time.” (Alma Dufault fmm, Gen.Sup, General Letter 1984)

Sr. Majella Tracey

OUR LADY OF AFRICA Nkolbisson - Yaounde

Our new house in Yawunde will become a Formation Centre for Africa; we intend to have sessions for Young Religious, for the Formators themselves, and for On-Going Formation. There are also excellent opportunities for study in quite nearby universities. This article shares with us the joy of the foundation of OUR LADY OF AFRICA, this long-awaited Centre...

At last we have the joy of being in our own house, your own house!



A section of the Centre building, which will be for the students, where our Sisters are living for the time being, until the reception, the chapel and the building for the community are finished

The fourth of February 2010 is an unforgettable date in the history of the foundation of Our Lady of Africa community. The two pioneers in the foundation: Sr. Michelle Lingomba and Sr. Adèle Wanzio, from the province of Congo Kinshasa, RDC, arrived in Yawunde on April 1st, 2006; they were welcomed by the Theresian Carmelite Sisters. Over the intervening years, several FMM joined them, either for studies or for formation. At this time the community has eight members: two Formators (Sr. Jorgina Silvino Duvane

and Sr. Salomé Betière-Iang Hien), three students (Adèle Wanzio Nsamba, Patricia Foutou Kondo, Madeleine Somda) and three Sisters to run the house (Sr. Michelle Lingomba Moika, Sr. Rose Tcheza Kazamba, Sr. Louise Sarr). We are of five different nationalities: (congolese from RDC, mozambican, burkinabe, senegalese and congolese from Congo Brazzaville).

On this day (February 4), we said goodbye to the Theresian Carmelite Missionary Sisters, after living together in the same place for four years. Already the evening before, we had had a beautiful thanksgiving liturgy, followed by a fraternal meal together. Everything was beautiful: so many happy memories of the arrival of our founding pioneers and of each Sister who had passed through, united us as we shared our farewell meal. We were united, too, in our hopes for the future life in Our Lady of Africa.

The two communities expressed these sentiments in a symbolic manner, through the exchange of gifts and words of thanksgiving for each other. During the preceding days we had, in the meantime, said goodbye to the parish priest of Cité Verte and to the parishioners, who in turn offered us their good wishes for Nkolbisson.

The next morning we were all very busy packing our things; from the hallways near our rooms down to the

hallway to the refectory, there were only boxes to be seen. The joy of being in our own house at last helped us to endure the pain of moving. At three o'clock in the afternoon we heard the rumble of the van from the Diocese of Bafoussam where our first community had been: history seemed to be linking us together. This van had come to bring us the chairs we had ordered, without any notion of the help for moving

came in Nkolbisson by workmen hard at work, since the house is not yet completely finished.

One of the rooms served as an oratory for our first Eucharist celebrated by Fr. André, Little Brother of Jesus, accompanied by three young Little Brothers. These latter are our neighbours, who were part of the history of the search for land and have been with us up to the very construction. At the end of the Eucharist there was the ceremony of the blessing of the house, followed by a simple meal shared in our new refectory. We were without the Blessed Sacrament exposed in our convent for a whole month, but we went every day to the Little Brothers of Jesus. March 4th was the great day when we welcomed the Blessed Sacrament after a Eucharist celebrated by our parish priest. It was a great joy for us: nothing is lacking now, since God has come to live with us and to remain forever. The noise of the on-going construction, of the placing of the furniture, of the workmen all around us, all that was for Him and for Lady Poverty whom he took as His

spouse with boundless love.

We wish to thank Sister Sue and her Council, the Provincials of Africa and the Isles and each and every Sister in the Institute for their mutual support.

Rose Tcheza, fmm



With the Carmelite Sisters, the FMM Sisters Adèle Wanzio, Michelle Lingomba and Merline Razanamanana; the two latter lived with the Carmelites until their departure for the new house

that they were bringing us. But there, they were! Without much to-do, the first group of five Sisters flew off joyfully to discover Nkolbisson, our new "homeland," but with a tinge of sadness at cutting the umbilical cord that had tied us to Cité Verte. The three students remained because of their studies and joined us only on February 27th. The group was wel-

Let only that little be left of me whereby I may name thee my all.

Let only that little be left of my will whereby I may feel thee on every side, and come to thee in everything, and offer to thee my love every moment.

Let only that little be left of me whereby I may never hide thee.

Let only that little of my fetters be left whereby I am bound with thy will, and thy purpose is carried out in my life- and that is the fetter of thy love.

Gitanjali, by Rabindranath Tagore, no.XXXIV



On Mission in Mauritania

The first missionary steps of Mathilde Saar, fmm, who is offering new activities to the women and young girls in Mauritania..., a presence and an activity which will awaken and bring down the barriers!

I am S. Mathilde Saar, Singalese, who arrived in Mauritania in Kaedi (a town situated at about 420km from Nouakchott in the south of Mauritania) on 7 April 2008. I came from Dakar via Nouakchott, the capital of Mauritania. After a time of rest, I tried to get inserted in my new milieu, which is totally different from Senegal.

Three months after my arrival, I began to visit some neighbouring districts and to meet some of the people! This, for me, was an occasion to discover and admire the know-how of the Mauritians in the domain of dyeing: material dyed with all sorts of colours and motifs, displayed in the shops. Mostly, these are done by cooperatives! I was able to be in contact with some families thru the help of my two sisters, Julita Dziekan and Marie Carmen Llorca, who are staying with me in the place. Relationships were created and multiplied thus reinforcing my discovery of the milieu and the knowledge of the families.

After this time of training, discovery and becoming acquainted, we started to introduce the first activities in October 2008 with a few women in charge of a large regional federation of Gorgol (the name of the region) bringing together some Peulh, Haratines, Baydanes (Maures) and some Soninke (or Sarakole or Marka). A few months later, in view of the novelty of the activities we were leading, another region joined us. Then by word of mouth, the news spread. A Union of 25 Cooperatives invited me to help them learn something apart from dyeing. There also, after a time of becoming acquainted, the first stage was introduced,

which was an apprenticeship in the fabrication of several types of mixture and the transformation of niebe (local haricot) into couscous. This activity was undertaken by the directors and delegates of the different groups who met twice a week in Kaedi. They were the ones who, later on, transmitted to the others what they have learnt.



Sister Mathilde with the women

Last January 2009 the sisters of the community were invited by a family to spend a day at their home. Their village, Diawaldiboujy, is situated at 35km from Kaedi. There was a warm and very simple welcome which touched us very much! On seeing the hard conditions of the lives of some women in this village, we decided to draw up a program of activities with them that could help them improve their lives. We contacted the Mayor of the town of Niabina on