

PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE 16TH OF EVERY MONTH:

16th May: *A prayer of thanksgiving for the gift of the community of Croatia which is going to celebrate its 50 years of life. It is a life full of blessings and a gift in Church which has grown and strengthened by suffering in the firmness of Christianity, lived with charity and steadfastness.*

The Croatian community was born on the “YES” of the two sisters, Sr. Terezjia and Sr. Maria, who, on hearing the voice of the Master, followed him wherever he wanted them, without asking too many questions, but in total availability to the will of God. Their formator Fr. Mariano, prepared them for a true Franciscan life in order to initiate a lively and faithful community. The hardworking and silent presence of these sisters made them to give witness of great faith and trust in God especially in the period of clandestine and during the time of war with Bosnia. Their witness was concretely manifested in living together with the Croatian people the hardships of daily life, always exposed to danger. They have given their house of formation to the National Caritas so that it can be used for the refugees and for the poor. Now, it has become the Center for charity for numerous needy people.

The Croatian community is a “Little Assembly”, as was desired by Fr. Marcheselli, a community faithful to the teachings of the Gospel and of our Rule and Constitutions. A presence which gives light and witness of radical Evangelical life which is expressed in joyous self giving to the very needy brothers and sisters.

16th June: *We pray for the sisters of China as they celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the foundation of the mission. Our commitment is for the five Chinese sisters, some of whom are preparing themselves for perpetual profession and the two Postulants. That they may truly become a light on the journey for their people who have known to live their faith and to keep the lamp of hope alight even in difficult moments of trial.*

China has the population of one billion and three hundred thousand inhabitants. Of these, 16 million are Catholics. We give a synthesis of the Commission for the Catholic Church in China which met from 11th to 13th April. “...we have observed the general atmosphere of confusion and of anxiety for the future, the suffering of some areas deprived of Pastors, the internal division of others, the lack of sufficient means for confronting the phenomenon of growing urbanization and for the depopulation of the rural areas. There has also emerged a lively faith, an experience of being Church, capacity of fruitful dialogue with the social reality of each territory. Many religious, with the spirit of self denial and living often times in real straitened economic situations, they spend themselves daily by being close to the families, the youths, the aged and the sick. The sad episode of the episcopal ordination of Chende and the constraints to which the Bishops are subordinated to, leaves wounds in the Church. We dwelt more on the importance of adequate formation for the Seminarians and the Religious.

Finally, the good news that the Diocese of Shanghai can go start the cause for the beatification of Paul Xu Guanggi, which adds to that of Fr. Matteo Ricci SJ. The Holy Father has renewed the urgent invitation of dedicating the day of 24th May, the liturgical memorial of the Blessed Virgin, Queen of China, to the prayer for the Church in China.” (ZENIT)

Suore Francescane Missionarie di Assisi Via San Francesco, 13 - 06081 Assisi
Tel. e Fax: 075/816825 - e-mail: suore.assisi@virgilio.it

FRANCISCAN MISSIONARY SISTERS OF ASSISI



IN THE WORLD

We stay in:

Russia	Zambia	Korea	USA
China	Malawi	Moldavia	Philippines
Japan	Mexico	S. Marino	Argentina
Croatia	Kenya	Italy	Romania
Indonesia			Brazil

May – June 2011

16th MAY – CELEBRATION OF OUR FAMILY SFMA

Dear sisters,

This year, 16th May marks the 269th anniversary of the birth in heaven of our beloved Founder, Fr. Joseph Anthony Marcheselli. It is a date which is very dear to us and it is deeply connected to our being missionaries.

In his writings, Fr. Marcheselli does not directly speak about mission, but in a germ, he offers us the indications on the style to be adopted in order to be missionaries and to whom our mission must be directed. He teaches us to be available to go wherever there is a suffering person and to search for the Truth of the Word lived through the exercise of corporal and spiritual works of mercy and pouring oil on the wounds of humanity.

It is wonderful to re read our history through the lives of our sisters who have gone before us, how they lived communal holiness in the first community through concrete responses and the courage of the first missionaries who knew how to welcome the appeals of the Church and the invitations of our Friars Minor Conventuals. But it is even more beautiful to see and to interpret the painting of our dear Sr. Victoria, who in 1936 was immortalizing the inspiration she had had about the presence of our Institute in all the continents, writing Korea next to the name of the continent of Asia. In reality, the intuition was prophetic because today, the Korean Province has become the center of evangelization for the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi.

Let us celebrate this feast with great joy and profound gratitude for what the Lord has done for His "Little Assembly."



Sr. M. Rosalinda Salmaso

News

ASSISI - From Romania, Sr. Bernaveta Ciobanu has arrived in Assisi in order to render her service at the Secretariat for the Missions. Her coming is indeed a blessing because it will be possible then, to respond to the requests, which up to now, have remained unanswered and she will bring new ideas for a better service to the sisters, the collaborators and the poor who are becoming more and more numerous, asking for help.



CROATIA – On 14th May, at Cherso, Croatia will celebrate 50 years of the life of the religious Province of the SFMA. It is at this island that Sr. Terezija and Sr. Maria began their journey of consecrated life. With all the sisters of Croatia, we thank the Lord for the gift of their presence in a land which has finally experienced peace and prosperity.



BRAZIL – Sr. Redenta Rondello has arrived in Italy for a period of rest. Sr. Redenta has been living in Brazil for 47 years, where she is a "naturalized" Brazilian. Her presence is of great support to that Province, which in the recent time, has given a sister responsible of the Mission of Mexico and it has also opened a new community in Argentina.



ARGENTINA – On 30th April, the Bishop of Concordia officially welcomed the three Brazilian sisters in the parish of St. Francis, where they have been since they arrived in January. Their Parish Priest, Don Carlos Tezzoli, is very open to the possibility of making an experience of the Latin American Church at his parish, for which, whoever desires to go to Argentina can do it by making contact with our Secretariat.



JAPAN – During the month of May, Mother General, Sr. Juliana Malama will be going to Japan to visit the sisters who live in Tokyo. Their house has been damaged, but their main worry is about their people who have been hardly struck and continually tried.



USA – On 4th May, Sr. Chiarina Maione leaves for the United States of America. After five of rendering service in the mission of the Philippines, Sr. Chiarina returns to the United States where she had already spent 33 years.

We wish her all the best so that she can carry on her mission with enthusiasm and joy which are characteristic of her.

A flower in the eyelet....

Last year, the Korean religious Province of the SFMA celebrated 30th anniversary of its foundation. It was a celebration of wonderful work and the protection of God. After 30 years, the perfume and the fragrance of the lily could not remain only in Korea, but has extended to China and Indonesia. This year in fact, we are preparing for the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the mission in China. In the last Provincial Chapter, we have also accepted the responsibility of the mission in the Philippines: the joy of being a Little Assembly!

Since 2003, we have been welcoming the novices from Indonesia and the Philippines for three months of their apostolic experience. It is very enriching experience also for the Korean and Chinese novices, experiencing internationality which brings a more deeper knowledge of the charism. They also make an experience of rendering services to: the handicapped youths, pastoral visits and assistance of the aged in their own families. All of the novices have expressed their joy of participating at the small and big events of the Province, of feeling strong bonds of relationship, the cooperation in the reciprocal exchange and feeling themselves as part of the world family of the SFMA. Meanwhile, the numbers of the Chinese sisters is also increasing: there are now five professed sisters and two postulants. In Indonesia, there are two professed sisters and several Aspirants who are waiting to enter, but the house cannot take in all of them.

At the beginning, being the first time to receive the novices, we were a bit afraid. Instead the differences and the uniqueness of each person, have opened our minds to uniqueness, to traditions, to the variety of personalities, colours, making us appreciate their own nobility. Having only one goal: GOD, makes us feel the sweetness of communal journey which goes beyond the differences. If we would live only among ourselves as Koreans, we would grow with a narrow mentality, which looks for the "moon in the well." The sharing of life, thought, positive attitude and the joy of these youths makes us experience the universality of the Church and

of our charism, making us feel that it is the plan of God.

Here, I would like to bring the testimony of Elena, an Indonesian novice: "I have discovered the precious value of consecrated life and I feel inspired by the example of the professed sisters who in their simple life try always to become more Franciscan sisters. The novitiate experience where there is a free and constant search for God, fills my heart with inexpressive joy". Monica narrates: "The teachings on the Rule, the Constitutions and the writings of the Founder, invite me to live my vocation as a Franciscan sister, more radically. I feel that little by little, I prepare myself to confront a life that will have its harshness and painful situations, that I will have to confront my limitations and those of others, finding strength in the positive experience which deepen the roots in having trust in God who waters his plant everyday. The study of the Constitutions makes me fall in love more and more with my congregation and I feel a deep gratitude for having been called to the Franciscan way of life. Our novices are quite firm in the Franciscan foundation of the "Little Assembly" as desired by our holy Founder. Meeting with the novices from other countries, they come to understand their call as being missionaries, especially, in welcoming the differences. All these wonders are possible, thanks be to God! We cannot hide that when these young sisters leave Korea, we really miss them.



From Japan, Sr. Samuela Yamada writes to us...

Dearest sisters in the Provinces, Vice provinces and Delegations,

A million thanks for the sincere prayers and for words of encouragement on the disaster which has happened here in Japan. I also thank all the sisters who are worried about our situation and are praying for us. Your closeness to us, gives us much strength and consolation.

To say the truth, when I was presenting at some meeting in Assisi, being the minority, I was feeling a little bit uneasy, but now, I feel very strongly the bonds of solidarity which comes from belonging to the same religious family.

Now, in Japan, there are more than 150 big and small nations of the world, who are helping in different ways. We are very thankful for this universal charity and especially for the fraternal love which they show for our country. I think that you already know through newspapers and also TV that almost half of Japan has been devastated by the various events; the earthquake, the Tsunami, the emergency that has been brought about by the nuclear reactor, etc, and the consequences of all this is still very evident.

A month has already past by, but still there are debris and rubbles; meaning, houses, ships, vehicles, etc, all these materials have created mountains of rubbles which are obstacles for reconstruction. Despite all this, people are working with much strength.

Still, we do not know when the 30,000 dispersed people would be able to go back to their towns, since they have lost everything they have had and they are now forced to live



an uncomfortable life, without water, food, houses, etc. But, it is marvelous to see the doctors, nurses and especially very many volunteers who often times work even in very extreme dangerous situations. Their work is indeed very heroic.

Some days ago, we received a contribution from ONLUS Assisi Solidale, for helping those who find themselves in need and for the very urgent needs, we sent it immediately to the Bishop of the area which was most badly struck by the earthquake. Thanks for the kind thought about us.

I think that recently, Japan has thought too much about technological and economic development, to the extent of losing sight of the morality and the spirituality which it has had as a traditional treasure. That is why, the Lord seeing all this, has given us a great occasion to return to Him. Now, many people have become aware of this, and now, Japan is moving towards a way of unity, praying, working and helping each other reciprocally.

Here, every now and then, new shocks return, sometimes small and at times quite strong and they really make us frightened, but we are all fine and we are living quite calmly. Our house, due to the earthquake has had some damages, that is, cracks on the internal walls. We are thinking of repairing and during the forth coming Assembly, 28th - 30th April, we will decide what to do.

During the month of April, we opened some new communities and some sisters have been transferred.

Sr. Teresia Dan, who made her first profession during the period of confusion brought about by the earthquake told me this: "I will not go anywhere, I would rather die here with you sisters ..." When I heard these words, it seemed as if I had received a punch, but at the same time, I strongly felt my responsibility of taking care of these sisters.

I am very happy to have these sisters and we will journey together with them, entrusting ourselves to the Lord.

With gratitude and fraternal love, from all the sisters of Japan.

He was indeed a true missionary

"Leave your country, your family and your father's house for a country which I shall show you ..." (Gen. 12:1)

I think that this is the way we can characterize or describe Mr. Mino Damato who left this world on 16th July 2010. It is true that he left his country, his family, his securities and his work which he loved and went to Romania because of the cry of the abandoned little ones and the sick people who could not leave him in peace. After he adopted Andrea and this one died, still the thought that the friends of the daughter were in the hospital was always on his mind and would not leave him in peace. "It is not right," he used to say, "that while some have too much, others do not have even the right to live." In the missionary meeting of 2005, I believe, we invited him to give a testimony of his beginnings and what made him to choose this category of poverty. He said that he was an admirer of Mother Teresa of Calcutta and his India was in Romania. In his life, he had met Mother Teresa three times and the last time was exactly during the time when he was thinking of taking away the children from the hospital and opening up their own house. Mother Teresa told him: "You do not think too much about these things, but you just do it." And this is how he started the Center at Singureni.

Even his meeting with our sisters was providential. The idea of having sisters among these children was not only that they are

loved, cared for and well educated, but also that there would be a figure that would always stay with them and would not abandon them again. His encounter with the young people was always like a father with his children, he has taught us many things. His perseverance, his courage, his trust in Divine Providence, many times, it has made us reflect and now I can say that only faith gave him this thrust. Especially, I think of all the obstacles that the authorities were putting across to him, all the indifference and the suspects about him, be it on the part of the protection of the children and on the hospital personnel. Even though, he still went ahead!

Mino invested in a lot of energy and money, but it has not been in vain. From small "animals" without rules and no education, I believe that in 12 - 14 years, they will have become misters and men and women who can go on well in society. I remember whenever he was coming here to Singureni from Italy, he was always with many suitcases and the children always around him. And then, when one of the children was sick, with patience and love, he used to stay close to him and he would not move from his bed, even for the whole full hour.

It happened that one of the children was very sick in the hospital. The analysis were not giving any sign of hope of survival until the following day. He was in need of blood transfusion. The hospital had no blood and it was a Saturday. Mino was trying to do all that was possible to save the life of the child. He made recourse, with an appeal to the First Aid, insisting with much force in order to obtain the necessary assistance so as to save the boy. The doctor was just laughing, being sure that he would not succeed. But his insistence and the prayer of the innocent child won and he still lived on for 4 more months.

Thanks Mino!

May the Lord welcome you among his saints!

Sr. Maria Damoc (Singureni)



Mino Damato
with two child HIV positive

Sr. Dorothy Lungu writes to us about the blessing of the recovery of the AIDS patients of Chililabombwe, Zambia

I would like to thank all those who have collaborated and offered their contribution generously for the recovery and bringing back to health many AIDS patients of this town.

A big group has been declared negative in the sense that they are well and they have become self sufficient. They have started a cooperative called, "LUCE Spa". Now, we have another group which meets twice a month. The program remains the same, but the attention is mostly directed towards babies with sick mothers, who in the first seven months receive only artificial milk, then we begin to give them food containing soybeans, groundnuts, and eggs. Almost all of them respond quite positively and are growing well. Unfortunately, we are unable to help the adults as we used to do some years ago because the prices of mealie meal and other basic foods have gone up very high.

My work at the communal clinic is a continuous challenge because almost all the patients come from PP1 and PP2 compounds. The populated area of the poor people and some shanty compounds are about a distance of 30 km away. Their condition of life has yielded to malaria, anaemia, dysentery, pulmonary, TB and AIDS endemic. I have never seen such poverty like the one I am seeing here. The people arrive at the clinic almost finished, the children often times are in very grave condition, with convulsions and other symptoms which bring about other psycho-physical damage to the children because they are not treated in time. Others arrive with very high fevers, impressionable anaemia, but often times, the children cannot make it to overcome the crisis because for us here, we do not have the necessary means to intervene and the referral hospital is in the town of Chingola, about 30 km away. Unfortunately, many children die and the poor people have to walk many

kilometres back home with the corpse of their child. For those who are not in very bad condition, we keep them at the clinic and thanks to God, we have some blankets to keep them warm, but no food. I remain there and suffer with them, keeping the tears for when I go back home. I feel very bad to see children and old people dying just because I am very vulnerable. In spite of this, I am happy because the Lord grants me the grace to stay close to them and to do something in order to comfort these brothers and sisters. I find strength in being able to communicate this because I know that I am not alone, but there is someone who loves these vulnerable creatures and hears their desperate cry, trying to do whatever is possible to comfort them. I am happy to be able to live the words of Jesus: "Whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do it to me."



Sick child
St. Kalembe Hospital