

Maastricht, November 2012

Dear Sisters in Belgium, Brazil, East Indonesia, Indonesia, Kenya, the Netherlands, Norway, the Philippines, Tanzania, Timor Leste, and the USA.

You have already been informed that, last September, we held an International Formation Team and Initial Formators' meeting in our mother house, Onder de Bogen, Maastricht, the Netherlands.

This meeting is considered as a time for renewal or re-foundation. In the Directives on Formation in a Religious Institute it is stated that proper renewal of religious institutes chiefly depends on the formation of their members. Referring to this Church document, it means that every member contributes to the renewal of the Congregation because of her privilege to go through various stages of formation. With this basic letter we invite you all, not only those who are involved in the formation ministry, to be part of this continuous process of renewal or re-foundation in our Congregation.

Renewal or reformation of the Congregation can take place every day in our life. We do not need to wait for an extraordinary change or special event to happen in order to

come up with something new. Every member of the Congregation is an agent and can thus bring about renewal or change according to her own capacity.

Perfectae Caritatis directs the renewal of religious life as a term of continuously returning to the Source of our Christianity and the Spirituality of our Congregation and of adaptation to the recent situation.

We are called to always go back to the Source of Christian life. The first and utmost aim in the formation of a CB sister is to follow Jesus Christ and to be more like Him. We constantly move towards a closer union with Him. It is a movement to imitate Him in His relationship with God the Father. Jesus listened, accepted and did the will of God and manifested His willingness by taking all the consequences. He showed us how to love God, His Father, by sacrificing Himself and giving up His life for the people whom He loves so that they may be saved. After surrendering His own life for love of God and humankind, He then commissioned His disciples to follow Him. This is the primary purpose of formation, of our being CB sisters; to simply FOLLOW HIM.

By Being members of this Congregation, we have chosen to follow Jesus Christ in a particular way. This now has become our uniqueness since our journey to imitate Him is, in a special way, institutionalized. We faithfully imitate Him and continue to take example by His form of life the

way Mother Elisabeth, our Foundress, did. Our efforts to follow Him are distinctive since we deepen our relationship with Jesus while gradually moving towards our genuine identity as CB sisters. Formation will help us to be followers of Christ in the spirit of Mother Elisabeth. It helps us to be stronger in our identity as CB, to live out the Spirituality of the Congregation passionately, to love and be proud of the Congregation all the more.

In general, formation is the process of purification and maturation. By performing formation we are invited to continue to purify our motivation in following Him on joining the Congregation. Purification does not stop when one leaves the novitiate house or takes final vows. Ego-centered motivation can still be present notwithstanding the level of religious life or the being advanced in years. We need to purify our motivation daily and direct it towards our desire to only follow Christ in greater perfection and exercise it in our daily life as members of the Congregation. Purification is not a once and for all effort. From Mother Elisabeth we learn how long this process of purifying her motivation to enter religious life, actually is. Initially it was her will to enter or be accepted into a congregation. She continued to pray for it. However, in the beginning it was clear that she was asking to let her own will happen. After a very long journey of hardship and unceasing prayer, her motivation was purified. She was able to surrender her own will and desire to the will of God

by saying: “if it is pleases God” (EG 5). Her experience inspires us to imitate her patience and courage in the process of purifying our vocation.

A process of purification is important since worldly motivations sometimes creep under our consciousness and lead us into other directions. Directions that are contrary to the desire to follow Christ and to love Him with all our heart, with all our souls and with all our strengths, and to love our neighbour as ourselves (cf. Purpose of the Congregation, Constitutions page 7). Formation and ongoing formation serve for us as a compass to redirect our journey. It helps us see and follow the right path and guides us towards our final destination; the union with the Ultimate Formator, God our Father.

Formation also is a process of maturation. To foster the growth of consecrated life means to develop all aspects of personal life. It is not limited to spiritual maturity only but covers all dimensions of human life; psychologically, culturally, affectively, emotionally and socially. Formation is a lifelong process. Our efforts to grow more mature in all aspects of our being woman CB sisters, also is a lifetime journey. This process demands from us genuine conversion. This conversion will transform us from our selfishness or egoism into the new person in Jesus Christ. It is the process of putting on Christ in our daily life (cf. Galatians 5, 16). It is our effort to give up the desire of the

flesh and transform it into the fullness of life in union with Jesus the Lord. This is only possible because of the work of Divine grace within us. However, from our side it requires continuous effort, openness and submission to His actions.

Our effort to be like Christ is a never ending process. It requires from us self-discipline and a certain level of asceticism. The world overwhelms us with its many things to offer and many desires to dream of. We can be carried away by worldly values even without being conscious of it since they are sometimes presented to us in a very subtle way. Mother Elisabeth advises us to be observant in dealing with worldly attractions. She strongly recommends us to arm ourselves with spiritual weapons in order not to be influenced by the wicked world (EG 70).

The integrated mature person grows, along with the deepening of her relationship with the Lord. If one always puts on Christ, one can get rid of one's egoism and develop virtues. We learn to emphasize Mother Elisabeth's integrity. In taking care of the sisters who were sent to the mission, she shared her experiences. Her strong quality and respect in her relationship with others is stated in EG 153, where she says: "...her demands should be accompanied by a feeling of compassion and love. One should not be selfish in the least in order not to give the impression of domination". We know that it took her a long time to reach the peak of her life's experience. It required from her self-

discipline, ascetic action, continuous prayer, discernment and examination of conscience. She did not choose to have an easy and mediocre life. She strived for full perfection of her vocation.

As her followers we have learnt to take her way of life as an example. We commit ourselves to live out her Spirituality granted to the Congregation and to the Church. Formation, Initial as well as Ongoing, will help us to be ever closer to and deeper in our understanding and living out her Spirituality. It takes a lifetime of commitment to be true to live according to her spiritual inheritance and pass it on. This process takes place daily and in each one of us. Only if we continue to allow this pace to happen in all our efforts of self-ongoing formation, proper renewal or re-foundation does take place in our Congregation.

As we commemorate the feast-day of Charles Borromeo, our Patron Saint, let us get a hold of his inspiration as one of the major reformers of the Church. He struggled to reform the Church by paying attention to the formation of the youth. He had seminaries build so that young boys could be educated and be better prepared for the priesthood. He promoted study, re-installed monastic discipline, and founded new orders and congregations. But, above all, he himself showed the fruits of his own formation by being faithful in following the example of Jesus, the Lord. He lived a life full of self-discipline and

sacrifices. He dedicated his entire life to the Lord and the people whom he served wholeheartedly. He made the renewal or reformation -of which he himself was part- take place, when he reached his full communion with the Lord.

Dear sisters, let us commit ourselves to the renewal of being CB religious by faithfully undergoing the process of self-ongoing formation. Let every one of us assume the responsibility of being an agent of renewal or reformation of the Congregation by experiencing the fruit of ongoing formation in our daily life. Let us reflect upon the privilege given to us to go through all ongoing formation in the Congregation and question ourselves whether it has served for us as a means of personal growth. Has formation helped every member to be a blessing for the community and become the source of fruitful energy for the apostolic ministry?

May the example of Mother Elisabeth and the heroic commitment of Saint Charles Borromeo inspire us as we commit ourselves to enliven the life of our beloved Congregation.

Happy Feast Day!



MEMBERSHIP

The Region of the Philippines

Perpetual Profession of Vows

On November 4th, 2012, sr Crysta Lynn D. Paghasian takes final vows in Bohol.

We will be one with these sisters in our prayers as they enter a new stage in religious life.

The province of Indonesia

Released from vows

Sr EflinWalu (Marlina Selvia EflinWalu) upon her request is released from her vows in our Congregation. In the letter Prot. N. 24682/2012, dated August 6th, 2012, the Archbishop Secretary of the Congregation of Religious Life and Secular Institutes granted the petition of sr Eflin. From this date onwards she is no longer a member of our Congregation and is no longer allowed to wear the habit.

We will keep her in our prayers now that she is about to start a new life. May God bless all her undertakings.

IN MEMORIAM

*“...I would always remain faithful to God and persevere
in His love until my death...” (EG. 20)*

The province of Indonesia

- Sr Secunda Soesmarlinah was born in Yogyakarta on December 27th, 1935, made her profession in our Congregation on July 26th, 1959 and passed away in Yogyakarta on Saturday, August 25th, 2012.
- Sr Carissima Parijem was born in Yogyakarta on December 31st, 1929, made her profession in our Congregation on January 31st, 1957 and passed away in Yogyakarta on Wednesday, September 12th, 2012.

The Dutch province

- Sr Magdalena Joop was born at Gombang, Indonesia, on June 12th, 1919, made her profession in our Congregation on September 15th, 1967 and passed away in Maastricht on Tuesday, September 25th, 2012.

Sr Secunda, Sr Carissima, and Sr Magdalena rest in peace.

NEWS FROM OUR MISSIONARIES

Sr Clazina Tan returned to Indonesia for good on October 21st last, after having devoted her services to the Congregation by taking care of the general archives in Onder de Bogen, Maastricht, for ten years. We thank her for her faithful dedication in fulfilling her assignment. We pray for her especially now that she is to adapt again to a different community and new assignment. May God bless

her all along the process of re-entry in her motherland and Province.

FROM THE GENERAL OFFICE

1. The International Formators Team and Initial Formators' meeting held in the Mother house, Maastricht, has come to completion. All the participants have meanwhile returned to their respective Areas. The meeting was very fruitful and, in general, the participants are satisfied with what they have achieved. They managed to fulfill one of the objectives of the meeting namely to revise and re-write the Guidelines on Formation. Their efforts make that we can now happily announce that, soon, there will be new Guidelines on Formation, both Initial and Ongoing, for the Congregation. These Guidelines are written ones and based on the shared experiences of our Formators from all the Areas. It means to say, that they are not merely written documents but actual experiences about the sharing of life as CB sisters, followers of Mother Elisabeth. We hope that these will also become the source of inspiration for all of us, as we faithfully continue our self-formation in our life-long process to be more close to our beloved Lord, in the spirituality of Mother Elisabeth.

We extend our gratitude to all the participants for their hard work and sincere love of the Congregation. We

express our gratefulness to the Provincial Board of the Dutch Province who supported and welcomed the participants wholeheartedly, to all the supporting committees and all the coworkers who have worked so hard and have been very supportive and helpful during the meeting. A word of gratitude also goes to our beloved sisters in Onder de Bogen, for their continual support and prayers. Thank you very much.

2. The GB will visit the Dutch Province from November 26th – 30th. Although the Provincial Board and the sisters in Onder de Bogen have already formally welcomed us, we will take this opportunity to introduce the new board members and to get better acquainted with the sisters.
3. Sr Lisbeth Cicuh Ratwasih went to Indonesia on October 8th, 2012, to be with her mother who is sick and who has been hospitalized in our Borromeus Hospital in Bandung. We hope that sr Lisbeth's presence will give her the strength to get well soon. Please pray for sr Lisbeth's mother and her family.
4. The General Consultative Body Meeting (GCB)
The general superior and her board is assisted in its policies by a general consultative body (Constitution 186). Part of Constitution 188 states that: the general consultative body shall try to discern the signs of the

times in order to arrive at a common vision which can guide the direction of the Congregation.

The General Board will convoke the first GCB assembly during its term of office in Yogyakarta, Indonesia from February 17th to March 6th, 2013. The Theme of the meeting is: Mysticism and Prophecy in the Heart of Our Congregation. This is to emphasize our continuous effort to deepen the mystical and prophetic dimension of our life as CB sisters. We hope that this meeting will come up with important policies in our response to the needs of the times.

We ask for your prayers and support for the delegates of this meeting.

Kind regards,
on behalf of the General Board

Sr Rosaria Nur Hardiningsih
General Superior