

Maastricht, June 2013

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

On June 26th, 2013, we commemorate the 149th anniversary of Mother Elisabeth's death and at the same time make a start with celebrating the historical moment which will mark the 150th year of her death on June 26th, 2014. It is certainly a very special event for our Congregation worldwide. We, therefore, invite all of you to make this spiritual event a meaningful and joyful one, full of gratitude to God.

Why is it so important for us to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Mother Elisabeth's death?

In the Bible, 150 is a special number according to the Book of Genesis: "*The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days*" (Gen 7: 24). This text tells about the story of God and reminds of the intolerable human wickedness as a result of which God thought of an effective plan to destroy all beings in the flood (Gen. 6: 13-17). God chose and guided Noah, a righteous and just man, to build an ark of 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. The ark probably had the same capacity as a variety of large cargo ships today.

Noah's faith did not waver when he was told about the aims and purposes of God. He believed that the unprecedented disaster would come. Building an ark was certainly not an easy task. However, "*Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.*" In fact, "*Noah did everything just as God commanded him.*" (Gen. 6: 22). Noah fulfilled God's instruction to build the ark exactly and accurately. Noah did this with the help of his wife and his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their wives.

Noah not only built the ark, he also warned the people around him and served God faithfully. He was a "bearer of justice and truth". However, the people ignored him. Given the spiritual and moral depravity of the people at that time, it is not difficult for us to imagine how the family of Noah might have become a mockery and was subjected to taunts and insults of the neighbours who were skeptical. He was considered stupid and mad. But he was not afraid. Noah succeeded in giving spiritual advice and support to his family.

Not long before the rain fell, God told Noah to enter the ark. When Noah's family and the animals were inside, God shut the door, so that the mockers couldn't enter. And when the flood came they were all swept away (cf. 2 Peter 2:5, Matthew 24:38, 39). Rain fell for forty days and forty nights that the waters flooded the earth for **a hundred and fifty days**. Only Noah, his family and the animals in the ark survived. As they were in the ark, there is no doubt that Noah led his family to reflect on this experience and be grateful to God.

The story of this *salvific* action of God to Noah and his family can become an interesting inspiration for us when reflecting on *the salvific* action of God to Mother Elisabeth through 'the ark' of the Congregation which she had established. Although these two models lived in a very different era, they more or less show common aspects. Both were righteous, just and faithful; both trusted in God and constantly walked with Him, both faithfully listened to God and observed God's commands, and both were considered prophetic as they were able to speak the truth, do justice and were grateful.

Mother Elisabeth died at the age of nearly 75. At that time she had been professed as a religious for 25 years and a few months. Psychologically seen, a 25-year-old woman is somewhat more stable, understands her obligations and responsibilities, and is mature and confident in dealing with matters she encounters in her life. Her 'maternal' capacity has also developed. The same goes for our Congregation. Over the past 25 years

Mother Elisabeth experienced God's presence; God, who accompanied and led the Congregation. The number of members of the Congregation significantly increased. And when Mother Elisabeth died the number of members of her Congregation amounted to about 54 sisters. The Congregation was growing and flourishing. This, however, was neither her first concern nor her ultimate goal. To Mother Elisabeth spiritual life's growth and development were the most essential. Therefore, to her, the growing unity of each member with the Divine was the most fundamental cornerstone for which the ark of the Congregation had been established. And the same way she grew in her understanding about the will of God, she also grew in finding ways to realize the love of God through her prayer, her encounter with others, and her services both in the community and the Church as well as in the society.

Like Noah, Mother Elisabeth was a loving person and a bearer of justice and truth: right and just in loving God; right and just in serving others. Poor and abandoned children deserved love, protection, and holistic education (cf. EG 51-53, 146, 149). People who were sick and found themselves in miserable circumstances needed to be visited, prayed and cared for and their souls needed to be achieved (cf. EG 27-37, 108-121). The sisters who were under her care were equipped with spiritual weapons in order not to be influenced by the wicked world, they were accompanied and supported by spiritual advices so as to be able to serve well. They were defended and protected when they were treated unfairly and when they experienced challenges and difficulties in their lives, they were approached gently and compassionately (cf. EG 70, 76, 107, 133, 146-149, 155).

By doing so, she emphasized the truth, justice, peace and compassion which are the fundamental virtues in our commitment to religious life. These virtues became well articulated as she did what she said. She accomplished them by being humble and consistent. The Congregation has thus become a source of abundant blessings both for its members

and for others, regardless of age, physical/psychological condition, race, religion and social status, as God is merciful and loves every human being without any boundaries and unconditionally.

Mother Elisabeth had a simple and clear vision. Her motivation and her way of thinking were neither complicated nor convoluted. She did not pretend and had a clear focus. Her lifestyle and deeds were also simple and apparent, especially in following and winning the will of God. She was a prudent woman, who could read and write well. Her writings were more in a form of phrase, sometimes less coherent, and make us laugh. This shows her originality or authenticity. That's her all over. The unconditional and compassionate love of God through Jesus Christ Crucified had always been the passion or motivation for her deeds and words and characterizes each set of sentences we read on every page of her simple booklet. As to Noah, God called and moved Mother Elisabeth to serve Him.

Like Noah, also Mother Elisabeth constantly lived and walked with God. Those who constantly live and walk with God also trust in God. They always depend on God who *'takes care of us so that we live' and 'provides everything we really need'* (cf. EG 15, 23-24, Ps. 84: 11; 119: 37). They become close to God. The Psalter says, *"The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them."* (Ps. 25:14). Fear of God or piety led Mother Elisabeth to continuously build and maintain her deep relationship with God, to the strongest level of her intimacy, so that she could understand wholeheartedly God's ways; God, who openly told her about His plan for her (cf. EG 6).

Thus we learn that a pious lifestyle is an abundant blessed life. Getting along with God and understanding His covenant which He has given us is a very beautiful blessing that will become an inner strength in the life of the Congregation. However, having been blessed with a devout and pious Foundress does not guarantee that we will have a good spirituality, because everyone should build her own relationship with

God. This is certainly not an easy matter. But we believe in the grace of God that continuously works in each one of us. God created us in His own image so that we can recognize ourselves in and respond to Him. He created in our personality the elements compatible with His personality. We have been given a mind in order to understand and respond to His thoughts. We also have the will to respond to His will. God opens Himself to be known. He also offers Himself to be close with and dear to us. If we want to welcome and respond to His offer or not, entirely depends on us. One thing is certain, God will be very happy if we welcome Him and make Him our dearest friend.

Finally, we come to the other aspect i.e. thankfulness. Like Noah, also Mother Elisabeth grateful to God. Mother Elisabeth saw God as: the One who maintains life and will take care of everything (cf. EG 26, 32); as The One who calls, accompanies, and blesses every human being with what they need (cf. EG 49, 63); as the God who cares for the poor (cf. EG 52) and the God who loves human beings unconditionally and knows no boundaries (cf. EG 30-41). These experiences enabled her to take part in the suffering of God caused by human's hardheadedness (cf. EG 100) and made her chose to always be with Jesus (cf. EG 140).

The expression of gratitude of Mother Elisabeth was genuine. It reminds us that God does not sleep. In all circumstances: difficult or easy, pleasant or troublesome, sick or healthy, God invites us to remain faithful to His presence. He has his own ways to manifest His works of salvation. He also trusts us. Therefore He chooses and accompanies each one of us even though we are not perfect.

Dear sisters, it is through this grace-filled event that we would like to express our union and communion with Mother Elisabeth and her first community members. We also would like to honour our Founding Sisters who once lived and who eventually returned to the bosom of God. We are grateful for the blessings which allow us to constantly experience our relationship with God. Mother Elisabeth and these

Sisters have made history in the life of the Congregation with their stories and memories, both written and non-written. Their stories and memories -all in their own unique way- have shown us the portraits of women who, with all their heart, soul, and power, compassionately loved Jesus Crucified till the end. We celebrate and honour their faith and courage. We also cherish their memories, prayers and recreations. We, therefore, consider ourselves blessed as we have taken part in the struggles that strengthened them and which have become an inspiration for us.

Finally, in order to welcome the 150th anniversary celebration of Mother Elisabeth's death, we invite you to join our congregational movement at different levels according to the situation and condition of your respective Area by holding the following activities:

At the general level:

- 1) To make this year a year of Jubilee of the Congregation with the theme: "*Praise the Lord with a grateful heart*" (Psalm 150, EG 139). This theme will be explored by means of various spiritual activities, such as retreats, recollections, community prayer, etc.
- 2) To hold holy hour or novena prayer starting from July 26th 2013 and lasting till May 26th, 2014.
- 3) To celebrate thanksgiving mass on June 26th, 2014. For this mass we encourage you (depending on your situation) to invite young people, our employees and/or mission partners followed by an open house.
- 4) To include in our daily prayer a special intention for vocation.
- 5) To produce a compilation booklet of reflections on the inspiration and charism of Mother Elisabeth through prayers, poetry, prose, songs and meditative drawings as highlight of our Jubilee celebration.

At community/unit/regional/provincial level:

- 1) To encourage sisters to write prayers, poetry prose, songs and make meditative drawings on the inspiration and charism of Mother Elisabeth. To be submitted to the General Board.
- 2) To write articles on the inspiration and charism of Mother Elisabeth and publish them in the local newspapers, magazines, etc.
- 3) To creatively produce a story telling of the sisters who have passed away.
- 4) To hold a seminar for the youth in honour of Mother Elisabeth on: 'Women in the story'.
- 5) To watch the DVD documentary film, *Arches and Bridges* with the youth.
- 6) To make a pilgrimage to the cemetery of Mother Elisabeth and/or sisters predecessors.
- 7) To plant 150 (fruit) trees together with our co-workers and/or mission partners as the expression of our gratitude and care for the mother earth.

Let us continue to trust God and encourage each other to show love and do good works. May the Name of the Lord be blessed forever and ever. Amen!

Happy feast day to you all!



MEMBERSHIP

*Based upon our response to the Church
to live for the Kingdom of God
in a religious community
marked by the charism of Mother Elisabeth,
we are bound and united with one another
as members of this Congregation. (Const. 64)*

The Region of Tanzania

Postulancy

On April 29th, 2013, two candidates started their postulancy in the Formation house of Tengeru – Arusha, Tanzania:

1. Dionisia Florence Mrao Parish, Rombo. Diocese of Shirima Moshi
2. Esta Pantaleo Mkenda Mashati Parish, Rombo. Diocese of Moshi

Habit Taking

On June 25th 2013, five postulants started their novitiate in the Formation house of Tengeru – Arusha, Tanzania:

1. Gladness M. Mollel Enduimet Parish, Diocese of Arusha
2. Sara Nkamba James Chomachankola Parish, Diocese of Tabora
3. Herimina Linus Msophe Loruvani Parish, Diocese of Arusha
4. Rosemary P.Amedeus Usseri Parish, Rombo. Diocese of Moshi
5. Modester Mbuki Willson Christ the King Parish, Sengerema. Diocese of Geita

Temporary Profession of Vows

On June 26th, 2013, three novices make temporary profession of vows in the Caroli Formation house of Tengeru – Arusha, Tanzania:

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| 1. Sr Taudesia S. Krispin | Keni Parish, Rombo. Diocese of Moshi |
| 2. Sr Consolata Vicent Massawe | Kibosho Parish. Diocese of Moshi |
| 3. Sr Stellah B. Jonathan | Bugando Parish, Butimba. Diocese of Mwanza |

The Region of The Philippines

Perpetual Profession of Vows

On June 26th, 2013, two juniors make perpetual profession of vows in the Star of the Sea Chapel, **Davao City, the Philippines:**

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| 1. Sr Marichu Mercado Cultura | Diocese of Peló |
| 2. Sr Vergenia N. Mondano | Diocese of Tagbilaran |

The Indonesian Province

Postulancy

On April 29th, 2013, thirteen candidates started their postulancy in the Formation house of **Timor Leste:**

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| 1. Anabela de Jesus Madeira | Imaculada da Concecao, Ermera, Timor Leste |
| 2. Eugenia Marcal dos Reis | Nossa Senhora do Carmo, Letefoho, Timor Leste |
| 3. Flugencia Imaculada Madeira Pereira | Imaculada da Concecao, Ermera, Timor Leste |
| 4. Imaculada Pereira Pinto | Imaculada da Concecao, Ermera, Timor Leste |

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| 5. | Ireni do Santos Brites | Imaculada da Concecao, Ermera,
Timor Leste |
| 6. | Izaura Madalena Galucho | Imaculada da Concecao, Ermera,
Timor Leste |
| 7. | Madalena de Deus | Nossa Senhora Do Carmo,
Letefoho, Timor Leste |
| 8. | Maria Martins | Imaculada da Concecao, Ermera,
Timor Leste |
| 9. | Natalia Maria da Silva | Watulari, Wikeke, Timor Leste |
| 10. | Olandina Casimero | Sao Francisco Xaveir, Hatolia,
Timor Leste |
| 11. | Olga dos Santos | Imaculada da Concecao, Ermera,
Timor Leste |
| 12. | Prisca Soriano | Imaculada da Concecao, Ermera,
Timor Leste |
| 13. | Rosalina Florindo
Madeira | Imaculada da Concecao, Ermera,
Timor Leste |

On June 26th, 2013, one candidate starts her postulancy in the Formation house of **Mrican, Yogyakarta:**

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| 1. | Hernawati Maria
Sidauruk | St. Maria Tarutung, Medan,
Sumatra |
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Habit Taking

On August 15th, 2013, three postulants will start their novitiate in the Formation house of **Mrican, Yogyakarta:**

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| 1. | Mimin Sumirah | Kristus Raja, Cigugur, Kuningan,
West Java |
| 2. | Agnes Marsela Pertiwi | St. Helena, Tangerang, West Java |
| 3. | Fransiska Rosalia | St. Maria Fatima, Magelang,
Central Java |

Temporary Profession of Vows

On August 15th, 2013, seven novices will make temporary profession of vows in the Formation house of **Mrican, Yogyakarta:**

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| 1. | Sr Laurensia (Anselma Lariama Tini Afrida Br. Sinaga) | St. Yohanes Penginjil, Bengkulu, Sumatra |
| 2. | Sr Sabina (Odilia Herlin) | St. Mikhael, Labasa, Muna, South East Sulawesi |
| 3. | Sr Francine (Fransiska Merlin Rosalina) | St. Petrus, Katedral, Bandung, West Java |
| 4. | Sr Assumpta (Maria Magdalena Dwi Handayani) | St. Perawan Maria Diangkat ke Surga, Dalem, Klaten, Central Java |
| 5. | Sr Herdian (Helena Diah Herdian) | St. Yohanes Rasul Kedaton, Bandar Lampung, Sumatra |
| 6. | Sr Clarisa (Clara Ayuk Kusumaningrum) | St. Perawan Maria Fatima, Sragen, Central Java |
| 7. | Sr Christine (Dewi Kartika Aritonang) | St. Kristoforus, Bakauheni, Lampung Selatan, Sumatra |

Perpetual Profession of Vows

On August 11th, 2013, seven juniors will make perpetual profession of vows in the Star of the Sea Chapel, **Yogyakarta:**

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| 1. | Sr Lidia Kristina Kurniati | Para Rasul Kudus, Tegalsari, Blitang, Sumatra |
| 2. | Sr Jacqueline Sihaloho | Kristus Raja, Tugu Mulyo, Sumatra |
| 3. | Sr Fernanda Ambar Pratiwi Bayuningsih | Marganingsih, Kalasan, Central Java |

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| 4. | Sr Thresmiati Yeti | Kristus Raja, Cigugur, Kuningan,
West Java |
| 5. | Sr Victoria Luruk | St. Antonius Padua, Kleseleon,
Timor |
| 6. | Sr Asti Anastasia Amul | Hati Kudus Yesus, Lando,
Manggarai, Flores |
| 7. | Sr Seli Eno | Stella Maris, Atapupu, Timor |

Let us pray for all these candidates and the sisters. May they always remain faithful to God who has called them to His service.

INMEMORIAM

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. (John 15: 16)

The Dutch Province

1. **Sr Odaline – Cornelia Josepha Maria Bogaerts** was born in Valkenswaard on November 29th, 1922, made her profession in our Congregation on May 6th, 1956 and passed away in Maastricht on April 18th, 2013.
2. **Sr Gerosa – Helena Cornelia Beurts** was born in Maastricht, on March 18th, 1914, made her profession in our Congregation on August 19th, 1934 and passed away in Maastricht on May 11th, 2013.
3. **Sr Humilia – Petronella Hendrika Maria Floris** was born in Lisse on December 10th, 1932, made her profession in our Congregation on November 16th, 1953 and passed away in 'Bergweide' Heerlen on May 25th, 2013.

4. **Sr Edeltruda – Agatha Bootsma** was born at Tirns, Wymbritseradeel, on March 9th, 1922, made her profession in our Congregation on May 6th, 1951 and passed away in 'Bergweide', Heerlen, on June 3rd, 2013.

NEWS FROM OUR MISSIONARIES

1. Sr Reni Susi Ngadi from the Elisabeth community (Region of Tanzania) stayed in Indonesia for her holidays. During her holiday she celebrated her silver jubilee with her batch. We hope that this festive celebration has strengthened her to continue her mission. She returned to Tanzania on June 7th, 2013.
2. Sr Hanna Henny from the Region of Tanzania will go to Indonesia on July 29th, 2013 and stay there till August 30th, 2013, for her spiritual updating and holidays.
3. Sr Marivic Braganza from Vietnam will go to the Philippines on July 3rd, 2013 and stay there till July 23rd, 2013 for her medical checkup and for holidays.
4. Sr Virgie Mascarinãs from Vietnam will go to the Philippines on July 25th, 2013 and stay there until August 19th, 2013, for her spiritual renewal and attending on-going formation seminar for local superiors in the Region.
5. Sr Maria Erna from the USA is on holidays in Indonesia from April 12th till July 15th, 2013. During this vacation she uses her time for personal retreat, for visiting family members and for visiting some communities of the Province.

We wish them all a fruitful stay in their home countries.

NEWS FROM THE GENERAL BOARD

1. On May 27th, 2013, sr Tavana returned to Indonesia after finishing her sabbatical ongoing formation program in EAPI and Emmaus in the Philippines. After finishing the program she was granted the opportunity to make an orientation to some communities in the Region. She thanked all of us, especially the Philippine Region, for accommodating her needs before and after the program. She returned to Kupang (East Indonesian Region) on June 3rd, 2013, to continue carrying out her mission in the Initial Formation.
2. From June 29th until July 19th, 2013, Sr Restie Ucab will make an orientation and pay family visits to our aspirants in Vietnam. She will be accompanied by sr Virgie.
3. Sr Rita Thomas from the Indonesian Province will leave for the Philippines on June 27th, 2013 for a short course. We wish her good luck with her program there.
4. Sr Vitaline Yulianti from the Indonesian Province is transferred to the Region of East Indonesia on May 1st, 2013. We pray that she will soon feel at home in her new community and ministry.
5. **Spirituality Centre, Onder de Bogen, Maastricht, the Netherlands**

The dream of the Dutch Province to use part of the 'Onder de Bogen' Mother House complex as a Spirituality Centre has finally come true.

With a grateful heart to God, sr Rosaria, the General Superior of our Congregation, inaugurated this Spirituality Centre on May 30th last.

At this simple ceremony that began with a Eucharistic celebration, our sisters, the heads of departments of the Mother House and also a

number of friends (such as priests, sisters, and volunteers/benefactors) were present. In her speech sr Guiseppo Jonkman, the Dutch Provincial Superior, outlined briefly yet clearly the process of the establishment of our Spirituality Centre. The process to realize this dream, which became visible for the first time during the General Chapter of 2005, has been going on for quite a long time, and involved a lot of people. One of the names worth to be mentioned is the name of sr Paulie Douven, former Provincial Superior of the Dutch Province. She was the initiator who persistently put her effort in realizing our common dream.

Towards the end of the Eucharistic celebration sr Rosaria, followed by twelve sisters representing the twelve countries where the CB ministers, with twelve lit candles in their hands, went up to the altar. Before the final blessing sr Rosaria asked the priest to bless the twelve candles as a sign that the Spirituality Centre is realized as a result of the support of all Areas of the Congregation. What impressed us most was that the priest did not bless all the candles at once. He blessed them one by one and, at the same time, he also expressed specific expectations for each Area.

After the Eucharist, sr Rosaria, the twelve sisters followed by all the attendees, left the chapel and joined the procession to the side garden of the Spirituality Centre. All attendees stood around the statue of Mother Elisabeth, our Foundress, which was newly inaugurated last April. Standing next to this statue, sr Rosaria declared the Spirituality Centre officially open. She also expressed her hope for us, the CB Sisters, to make this Spirituality Centre a place to share the spiritual heritage of Mother Elisabeth with the people. By doing so, we are able to respond to people's desire/longing for a deeper spiritual experience.

While singing the song of the 'Star of the Sea' we left the garden and went to the refreshment room. After having a cup of coffee, all

attendees were given the opportunity to look around in the Spirituality Centre complex and admire the facilities.

AGENDA OF THE GENERAL BOARD

DATES	SISTERS	ACTIVITIES
July 18 – August 07	Sr Rosaria Nurhardiningsih and Sr Hetty Sri Widjajanti	Pay visit to the sisters in Memphis and Silver Spring Community, the USA.
July 19 – August 22	Sr Lisbeth Cich Ratwasih and Sr Jane Ann Aballe	Pay visit to the sisters in Jakarta, Tangerang, Bandung, and Cigugur, the Indonesian Province.
August 10 - 29	Sr Rosaria Nurhardiningsih and Sr Hetty Sri Widjajanti	
August 27 – October 10	Sr Lisbeth Cich Ratwasih and Sr Jane Ann Aballe	Pay visit to the sisters in the East Indonesian Region and attend Regional Assembly which will be held from September 28 – October 5, 2013.
August 30 – October 15	Sr Rosaria Nurhardiningsih and Sr Hetty Sri Widjajanti	

Kind Regards,
on behalf of the General Board



Sr Rosaria Nur Hardiningsih
General Superior