

Maastricht, November 2013

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

As we commemorate the feast of St Charles Borromeo, our Patron Saint, today, let us reflect upon some important aspects of our religious life.

On this so precious moment in the history of our Congregation, we would like to convey to you the message from our Pope Francis. During the meeting of the Superiors of Women Religious throughout the world (UISG), he emphasized some significant points in living our religious vocation.

One of his inspirational messages that we can deepen together is about the emphasis he put on our role as ‘mother’. He summoned us to be true to our motherhood. As religious nuns who have professed the vow of chastity, it is important to develop our motherhood. By saying this, he referred to the fruitfulness of our vocation; a spiritual fruitfulness, that is. As religious we should bear fruit, the spiritual fruitfulness should be of our concern. He referred to the example of Mary’s spiritual motherhood; Mary, Mother of the Church.

With this message of the Pope in mind, let us look more deeply into our own life. How fruitful are we in our life as CB sisters and in our services in the Congregation? How much spiritual fruit do we bear? Questions we can reflect upon and by which we can have ourselves challenged continuously as we journey along the path of congregational life.

Let us explore the possibility to develop our motherhood. First of all we can learn from our Foundress, Elisabeth Gruyters. We always address her as Mother Elisabeth. When we call her ‘mother’, what do we really mean by the word ‘mother’? Do we call her with all the great many qualities of being a mother? Are we aware that when we call her ‘mother’, we do this with great reverence and honour?

We have inherited her Charism as: “The Unconditional and Compassionate Love of Jesus Christ Crucified”. Having experienced this unconditional and compassionate love had formed her as a religious

person who zealously lived out the same love. It is not difficult for us to identify her motherhood qualities when we see to her life story. Her compassionate love is very obvious in her lifelong journey. Even long before she founded this religious Institution.

A mother bears an understanding of a deep compassion towards her beloved children. She has a strong intuition to protect her children who are still innocent and unaware of any harm in the world around them. She will defend her defenseless child. With her compassionate heart a mother is capable of protecting her children since the moment they are born. She is willing to share her love even her own life for the wellbeing of her beloved children. A mother even is willing to shed her blood till the last drop for the life of her children. Her compassionate heart enables a mother to sacrifice everything for her child.

We could see the same compassionate heart in the life of Mother Elisabeth. Being loved unconditionally by her beloved Jesus transformed her life into a life of service for others. Her compassionate motherhood becomes obvious in her willingness to sacrifice everything for the salvation of others. She has never shed her blood as a mother did for her new born baby. But she was willing to give her own 'blood' as long as others could live. She said '... I would suffer this only for the love of God and that for the love of God I would gladly be gossiped about and be criticized, hauled to and fro over the coals, be ground like wheat, if only I could comfort those poor sick and give them any help' (EG 117).

We could ask ourselves how fruitful are we as CB sisters? We can even challenge ourselves by questioning whether our lives bear enough fruit or bear no fruit at all, even to the extent of being a 'spinster' (this word was used by Pope Francis during the audience with the General Superiors). There are means to measure whether as CB sisters our lives are fruitful or fruitless. Are we going to measure our fruitfulness by seeing our successes or failures in our ministries? Are we going to measure it by seeing that our lives bear spiritual fruits? We can measure our successes on motherhood by pointing on successes and many products or great tributes of acts in our ministries. We can also measure by counting how many school buildings, hospitals, clinics and orphanages we can build during our lives of service in the

Congregation. However, these material achievements do not guarantee our fruitfulness as CB sisters. Instead the spiritual fruit we bear in our service and community life can be measured by the sharing of love and life in our service.

Thus, let us measure our motherhood in the compassionate and unconditional love we share to others as practiced in the life of Mother Elisabeth and of our Patron Saint, St Charles Borromeo.

In these two great persons we see their constant and measureless self-sacrifice. We can see in Mother Elisabeth her endless struggle for the wellbeing and salvation of others. She did not think of her own benefit. She would give up anything so that others could gain eternal life. She was willing to suffer for the needs of the poor and marginalized. Similar love and similar deeds marked the life of Charles Borromeo, our patron Saint.

Dear sisters, on this feast day let us be grateful for these two persons in the Congregation, Mother Elisabeth and St Charles Borromeo, who still inspire us with their compassionate love. With their inspiration we hope that we can continuously develop our compassionate hearts; hearts that are endlessly ready to sacrifice so that others may have life. Let us ensure that our lives bear spiritual fruits abundantly.

## **Happy Feast Day!**

### **NEWS FROM THE GENERAL BOARD**

1. Sr Gloria from the Philippine Region arrived in Indonesia on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013. She will stay in Indonesia for some years and get involved in the life and mission of the Indonesian Province. We do hope that she will soon adjust herself to the new situation and culture of Indonesia and that she will be enriched by this experience.
2. Sr Rita Thomas from the Indonesian Province returned to this Province again on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013, after having finished her four months courses in The Philippines. Congratulations, sr

Rita! We hope that this opportunity will enrich her in her apostolic ministry.

3. On September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013, srs Yesina, Lidwiana, and Yetty from the Indonesian Province arrived in the Philippines. They will make some preparations for their future ministries. Sr Yesina takes a course in English for some months. Sr Lidwiana takes a course on Clinical Pastoral Education for the preparation to go to Brazil. Sr Yetty takes a course in English as preparation for further study.

## **The Region of East Indonesia**

The sisters conducted a Regional Assembly from September 28<sup>th</sup> – October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013. At this assembly the Regional Board for the period from 2010 – 2013 rendered account for the service during its term of office to the sisters. In turn, a new Regional Board was appointed by the General Board.

Our sincere thanks goes to all the members of the Regional Board; Sr Goretti, Sr Ignatine, and Sr Patromana who finished their service.

After having listened to the aspirations of the sisters in the Region and based on our observations during this visitation, the GB decided to add one more sister to the newly elected Regional Board. It means that, for the term of office lasting from 2013 – 2016, there are four members on the Board; the Regional Superior thus being assisted by three sisters.

They are:

Sr Taviana: Regional Superior

Sr Veni Muda Geroe: first elected member; will substitute the regional superior in case of impediment or vacancy.

Sr Ancilla Setyorini: member

Sr Assisia Wadan: member

We accompany the new Board Members with our prayers and best wishes so that they will be granted with many blessings in their service to the Region.

## **The Province of Indonesia**

Blessing of the Novitiate House in Manleuana, Timor Leste.

As one of the preparations done by the Indonesian Province to prepare Timor Leste as an independent unit in the future, an initial formation house is being built in Manleuana, Timor Leste. Up to now, the formation of candidates for postulancy takes place in Dili. Once the postulants are ready to take the next step of formation, on the novitiate level that is, they are sent to Kupang, East Indonesian Region, to continue their formation.

After some years of doing this arrangement, the time has come for the sisters in Timor Leste to take care of both the postulants and the novices in their own country. A formation house is constructed aside many other preparations. After a long process the house is ready and finally on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013, the Feast Day of Charles Borromeo, our patron Saint, the Novitiate House is going to be opened and blessed. After this formal opening the house will be ready for the novices to have their initial formation here. Let us pray that the seed of vocation can grow and bear fruit in abundance.

## **The Region of the Philippines**

From December 3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013, the sisters of the Region will get together to conduct an Assembly. At this assembly the current Regional Board Members will present an account of their term of service to the sisters. New Board Members will be assigned by the General Board. We pray that the process will run smoothly and that the new Board will be able to render its best service to the sisters, the Congregation, the Church and the society.

The new Regional Board will be installed on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013. They will serve the sisters of the Region for a period of three years e.g. up to December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Our sincere thanks goes to all members of the Regional Board (Sr Hedy Salvador, Sr Nerisa Jaime, and Sr Rachel Real) who are about to finish their service.

## **NEWS FROM OUR MISSIONARIES**

Sr Hanna returned to Tanzania on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013, after having spent her holidays in her home country, Indonesia. We hope that her home leave experiences have inspired her to continue her mission in Tanzania.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

### **The Region of East Indonesia**

#### **Habit Taking**

Four postulants start their novitiate on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

1. Fransiska Farida Yumiarni, from the St Francis Xaverius Parish, Sorong, Papua
2. Sofia Nogo Manuk, from the St Francis Xaverius Parish, Menanga, East Flores.
3. Skolastika Polas Jawa, from the St Peter Parish, Sorong, Papua.
4. Rebeka Paulina Werang, from the St Peter Parish, Sorong, Papua.

#### **Temporary Profession of Vows**

Three novices profess their first vows on November 4<sup>th</sup> 2013:

1. Sr Maria Vidensia Benga Kia Raring, from the Christ the King Parish, Kupang.
2. Sr Fabiana Sakerebau, from the St The Assumption of Mary Parish, Mentawai.
3. Sr Benedikta da Conceicao, from the Immaculate of Mary Parish, Timor Leste.

## The Province of Indonesia, Timor Leste

### Habit Taking

The following postulants start their novitiate in Timor Leste, East Indonesia, on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013:

1. Alianca A Dos Santos from Ermera
2. Angelina Da Graca Pereira Baros from Same
3. Celestina De Deus from Letefoho
4. Diamantina Salsinha from Ermera
5. Elisa Fernandes Dos Santo from Ermera
6. Gabriela Farima Martinus from Ermera
7. Isabel De Jesus Madeira from Ermera
8. Isabela Albes Dos Santos from Ainaro

Let us pray for these new novices and junior sisters as they continue to take further steps in their calling.

We congratulate and welcome them to their new lives.

### IN MEMORIAM

*For, Thou didst knit me together in my mother's womb.  
Wonderful are Thy works! (Ps 139).*

### The Dutch Province

1. **Sr Redemptrix – Maria Petronella Adriana Kuijpers** was born in Oosterhout on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1923, made her profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Maastricht on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1956 and passed away in Nijmegen on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013.
2. **Sr Theophile – Petronella Giesbertz** was born in Nijmegen on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1918, made her profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Maastricht

on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1944 and passed away in Maastricht on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

3. **Sr Felicie – Angela Henriette Maria Steverink** was born in Amsterdam on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 1926, made her profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Maastricht on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 1954 and passed away in Maastricht, ‘Klevarie’, on August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013.
4. **Sr Woutera – Doetje Bouma** was born in Witmarsum on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1917, made her profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Maastricht on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1936 and passed away in Maastricht on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013.
5. **Sr Ernestie – Johanna Maria Catharina Weterings** was born at Wijk aan Zee en Duin on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1912, made her profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Maastricht on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1937 and passed away in Maastricht on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

## **The Province of Indonesia**

1. **Sr Stefina Sri Mustikarini** was born in Yogyakarta on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 1947, made her First Profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1988 and passed away in Biara Santa Anna, Yogyakarta, on August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Kind regards,  
On behalf of the General Board



Sr Rosaria Nur Hardiningsih  
General Superior