

# BASIC LETTER

**August 2015**





Maastricht, August 2015

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

Today, on August 15, we celebrate the Assumption into Heaven of Mother Mary. On that same day we are invited to commemorate and celebrate that so meaningful event for our Congregation that took place on August 15, 1836, namely when Mother Elisabeth heard the blessed 'Yes' from Heaven. Both women had strong faith and a deep relationship with God. This reflection invites us to draw on the strength of these two women. Mary is the Mother of Christ and Mother Elisabeth Gruyters is the Foundress of our Congregation. Mary said 'YES' to the plan of God which made her the mother who gave birth to Jesus Christ, the Saviour. While Mother Elisabeth heard and received the approval of Heaven, namely: *IT WILL HAPPEN* (EG. 6).

The work of Salvation requires Mother Mary's 'YES'. The answer she gives is sincere and humble. This can be seen in her answer to the Angel: '*...I am the handmaid of the Lord, be with me according to your word*' (Luke 1:38). Mother Mary said YES because of her trust and deep faith in God. Mother Mary is willing to bear all the consequences attached to her YES answer. Because of her partnership with God, Mary's YES is real and true. As for Mother Elisabeth, the approval of Heaven is God's answer to her deepest desire to be accepted into a

convent. For years she had prayed, pleaded and shed tears. The situation and circumstances in which the city of Maastricht found itself at that time strengthened her in her longing. Both these women have set us an example of how to live according to this 'YES'.

In this reflection we will focus on deepening the spirit of Mother Elisabeth. Mother Elisabeth received the blessed 'YES' from Heaven on August 15, 1836. In those days, Europe went through a crisis situation due to the French Revolution. It had a great impact on the circumstances and the situation in the Netherlands and, also of course, on the city of Maastricht where Mother Elisabeth lived at the time. Crime, moral decline and poverty ran rampant whilst Religious life faded and Christian values declined. The city of Maastricht was considered a 'closed city', where people were not allowed to enter and settle (EG. 53). The situation in which society found itself, fostered her desire to be accepted in a convent even more (EG. 3 and 4).

As time went by, this longing became more 'purified'. If, at first, Mother Elisabeth longed to be accepted into a convent in the end she settled for a convent to be established in the city of Maastricht, where God will faithfully be glorified. Mother Elisabeth confirms this in EG. 5: '...All this would be indifferent to me as long as there would come souls to it who would serve God honestly and in perfection'.

And the Lord replied to Mother Elisabeth's desire by saying: 'ALL THINGS WILL COME'.

God's answer strengthened Mother Elisabeth in starting the journey of the Congregation. A long journey on which she experienced both joy and sorrow. It is the power of faith, always at work in our Congregation and our deep trust in God which makes that the spirit of Mother Elisabeth is still alive and lived out till this very day.

Several months ago the Congregation organized a Pilgrimage Program geared to Mother Elisabeth in Maastricht from May 1 till May 30, 2015. This event invited the participants and also us, who currently reflect on 'going deeper' and drawing new strength from the spirit of Mother Elisabeth. Journeying 'back to the Source' by following Mother Elisabeth's footsteps as it has been forwarded by the sisters has enlightened the participants. The encounters with the sisters in our Onder de Bogen convent, both physical and in prayer, have given us the confidence that 'The flame has not been extinguished yet'.

The historic screen clearly depicts that this Congregation has known both good and dark times. History shows the development of the spiritual life of the Congregation. At the beginning of the founding of the Congregation, the situation of the society was characterized by a variety of concerns. Mother Elisabeth was driven to respond to the situation and needs of that moment in time. The city of Maastricht experienced a variety of negative impacts due to the French Revolution: crisis related poverty, crime, moral degradation, religious life and an uncertain economic situation. In that situation Mother Elisabeth had lit the fire and the sisters lived it in their concrete life. The flames of love are growing in line with the development of the Congregation. Membership is increasing, the apostolic works

are expanding and the communities of the CB sisters begin to develop. It becomes a glorious period in the Congregation of that time. Many needs in the society can be responded to by the Congregation and many sisters were sent to the lands of mission to bring the Kingdom of God through the witness of their lives.

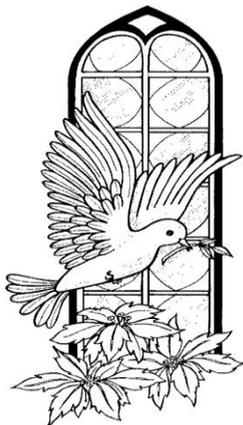
Like the parable says: 'the wheels are always turning'. That's the way it has always been in our Congregation. Our Congregation has also experienced dark times. A lot of work but without a deep spiritual life has undermined the spiritual life journey of the Congregation. The flames which initially smouldered softly, slowly began to 'fade'. The Church invited the religious congregations to 'return to the Source', back to the spirituality of the Foundress or Founders. For us a chance par excellence to, at the invitation of the Church, re-explore and deepen the spirituality of Mother Elisabeth. Deepening of and reflection on the spirituality of our Foundress is what we did in various ways and forms. These efforts are still going on till this very day in all our Areas.

Let us stand still and reflect for a while on how far that fire is still glowing and lived out, both in the mission and in community life. Let us briefly look at the reality happening around us. At present, our Congregation faces numerous challenges: a diminishing number of members, the work which requires professionalism and makes that also our sisters must possess more expertise, the economic crisis which pushes us to move towards being financially self-reliant as well as various other challenges that require the need for quality ourselves as religious. The fire or the flame of our spirituality will keep

glowing if each of us lives it out in our daily live. So that each of us can give witness through our concrete life. The situation in our society today is challenging each of us is to maintain and support the fire that has been lit by Mother Elisabeth. In fact, it can also be a threat to extinguish the fire. Therefore, we are invited and required both individually and together as a community, to continuously deepen, live and share the flame that has been bequeathed to us by Mother Elisabeth so that it will continue to glow the way the sisters bear witness of this. in their concrete lives.

Now, it becomes an invitation for us all to continue to maintain, support and share this flame in our lives. The spirituality of Mother Elisabeth that has been inherited by us needs to be continuously lit and distributed. Together with God and in Him, we are called to bring God's Kingdom in this life and in our mission. Just like Mother Elisabeth who wrote down her experiences in EG. 63 we, too, then dare say: '*... daily experience and a great desire for spiritual progress that went with it ... as we were blessed daily by the invisible hand of God*'.

## **HAPPY FEAST DAY!**



## **MEMBERSHIP**

*“Our life as religious is rooted in the call of total dedication to God and His Kingdom and the decision to respond to this call. To opt for this Congregation means that one intends to respond to God’s call in the spirit of the Gospel as it was lived by Mother Elisabeth, and formulated in the Constitutions. This response presupposes a continuous desire to grow in the love of God and neighbor.” (Const. 69)*

### **A. Province of Indonesia**

On August 9, 2015, three postulants took their religious habit and started their period of novitiate. The ceremony took place in the Maria Bintang Samudra Chapel in the Provincialate, Jln Kolombo, Yogyakarta - Indonesia. Meanwhile, on June 26 and August 1, four aspirants started their postulancy. This ceremony was held in Postulate CB, Jln Mrican, Yogyakarta. We pray that they may have the courage to continue to carry out the spirituality of Mother Elisabeth in their daily life.

May they persevere and be faithful to God’s Will.

#### **Habit Taking / Novitiate:**

1. Arigita Vina Pertiwi from Bandar Lampung.
2. Agustina Sekarwati from Bandar Lampung.
3. Soklastika Fibriana Ekamawati from Muara Bungo Jambi.

#### **Postulancy:**

- On June 26, 2015:
  1. Benedikta Yosefa Perada Buga from Lembata NTT.

- 2. Margaretha Risti Zakarias from Yogyakarta.
- On August 1, 2015:
  1. Fransisca Romana Ayu Triani from Bengkulu.
  2. Agnes Desi Kristianti Munthe from Kalianda Lampung.

## **B. Region East Indonesia**

Two postulants from the Region East Indonesia receive their habit and start their Novitiate on August 15. We pray for their perseverance and courage to continue to another stage of their formation as Novice.

These two Postulants are:

1. Maria Deti Weran from the Parish of St Yoseph, Fakfak
2. Elisabeth Tuwa from the Parish of St Yoseph, Laja-Mataloka-Bajawa

## **IN MEMORIAM**

*“The Lord will rescue me from every evil threat and will bring me safe to his heavenly kingdom.” (2Tim 4: 18)*

1. **Sr Joannita Hendrika Petronella Gerarda van der Meer** was born in Cuijk, the Netherlands, on March 5, 1915, made her profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Maastricht on May 21, 1937 and passed away in Maastricht on June 10, 2015.

2. **Sr Savio Augusta Louise Henriette Bruggemeijer** was born in Zutphen, the Netherlands on July 1, 1928, made her profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Maastricht on May 11, 1954 and passed away in Maastricht on June 12, 2015.
3. **Sr Nicoline Thomas** was born in Zandvoort, the Netherlands, on April 14, 1925, made her profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Maastricht on May 6, 1951 and passed away in Maastricht on July 24, 2015.
4. **Sr Maria Yosefa Tshi Kiem Moi** was born in Sambas-Kalimantan, Indonesia on July 15, 1927, made her profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Indonesia on July 16, 1962 and passed away in Yogyakarta-Indonesia on July 7, 2015.
5. **Sr Waltera Maas** was born in Alphen aan den Rijn, the Netherlands, on June 20, 1918, made her profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Maastricht on May 19, 1943 and passed away in Maastricht on July 28, 2015.

May God embrace them with His Love.

## **NEWS FROM OUR MISSIONARIES**

1. **Sr Hildegardis Hayon** from the Region of Tanzania went home to Indonesia for her medical treatment. She left Tanzania August 3 last and will return to Tanzania on October 3, 2015. We pray that this opportunity has energized her to continue her mission in Tanzania.

2. **Sr Irene Kristiani and sr Aufrida Asih Endriati** from the Province of Indonesia have received the Cross of Mission from sr Rosaria Nur Hardiningsih in the Eucharistic celebration which was held on July 28, 2015, in the Maria Bintang Samudra Chapel in the Provincialate, Jln Kolombo, Yogyakarta - Indonesia. Sr Irene Kristiani will be sent as a missionary to the Netherlands whereas sr Aufrida Asih Endriati will go to live and work in Belgium. The two of them are expected to arrive in the Netherlands and Belgium resp. by the end of August or early September 2015. We pray that God will bless and accompany them on their journey.
  
3. **Sr Pauline Endang Sundari** from the Unit of Norway is on home leave in Indonesia from August 21 – October 15, 2015. We wish her an inspiring vacation with the sisters in the Province, her relatives and family.

## **NEWS FROM THE GENERAL BOARD**

1. **Name correction of the sister** who took Final Profession on August 9, 2015. In the Basic Letter of June 2015, on page 9, is written the name of sr Chrismerry Merry Darmiati. The correct name is: Sr Chrismerry Merry Darniati.
  
2. **Sr Maria Cecilia Perlas** from the Region of the Philippines will have an orientation for two years in the Province of Indonesia. She arrived in Jakarta

beginning of August 2015. Sr Cecilia will gain experience in the apostolate and in the communities as well as share her spirituality to fellow sisters in Indonesia. Hopefully through this orientation, she can broaden her horizons and get to know the Congregation in the Province of Indonesia better.

### **3. The New Tanzanian Regional Board**

*In service to our community and its mission,  
some sisters are called*

*to assume the function of authority.*

*This is exercised at every level of the Congregation:*

*at the local level by the local superior*

*or a sister – in charge,*

*at the provincial level by the provincial superior,*

*c.q. vice-provincial superior or regional superior,*

*at the congregational level by the general superior. (Const.111)*

After having listened to the aspirations of the sisters in the Region and based on our observations during the visitation, through prayers and discernment with the sisters, the General Board has decided to assign:

1. Sr Ester Muharami as Regional Superior.
2. Sr Odilia Sadinah as the first board member. She will substitute the Regional Superior in case of impediment or vacancy.
3. Sr Regina Chibibi Mangungwa as the second board member.
4. Sr Christina Mapunda as the third board member.

The new Regional Board was installed on August 2, 2015. They will serve the sisters of the Region up to July 31, 2018.

We ask your prayers and support for this new Regional Team so that they may carry out their task and responsibility for the greater glory of God. We hope that, together with the sisters, this new Board will continue to build up and develop the Region according to the spirit of Mother Elisabeth.

We sincerely offer our words of gratitude and appreciation to the Regional Superior and all the members of the previous Regional Board whose term of office has come to an end now: sr Bernadetha Charles Kessy, sr Marie Jose Voeten and sr Hanna Henny Rustiyati.

#### **4. General Consultative Body Meeting:**

From September 1 – 28, 2015, the Congregation will hold its General Consultative Body Meeting in Maastricht. This meeting will be attended by the leaders of the Areas and one or more board members.

In accordance with Constitution No. 188 the General Consultative Body has the following task :

- a. exchange experiences and insights about the implementation of the mission of the Congregation in various Areas;
- b. observe in order to distinguish the real needs in the Areas of the Congregation;

- c. based on the above mentioned, evaluate whether the Congregation as a whole has responded appropriately to the apostolic mission of the universal Church.

Let us pray for this General Consultative Body Meeting so that all plans can be carried out in accordance with God's will.

### **The participants in the General Consultation Body Meeting:**

**a. General Board:**

Sr Rosaria Nur Hardiningsih as General Superior  
Sr Lisbeth Cicih Ratwasih as Vice General superior  
Sr Jane Ann Aballe as General Board member  
Sr Hetty Sri Widjajanti as General Board member

**b. The Dutch Province:**

Sr Guiseppo Jonkman as Provincial Superior  
Sr Vincenza Pranawanti as Provincial Board member

**c. The Indonesian Province:**

Sr Carolina Nuryati as Provincial Superior  
Sr Yesina Sumarni as Provincial Board member  
Sr Yosefine Kusuma Hastuti as Provincial Board member

**d. Region of Tanzania:**

Sr Esther Muharami Regional Superior  
Sr Odilia Sadinah Regional Board member

**e. Region of the Philippines:**

Sr Maria Heddy Salvador as Regional Superior

Sr Amelita Intervencion as Regional Board member

**f. Region of East Indonesia:**

Sr Taviana as Regional Superior

Sr Ancilla Setyarini as Regional Board member

Kin regards,  
On behalf of the General Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rosaria', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sr Rosaria Nur Hardiningsih  
General Superior

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