

BASIC LETTER

APRIL 2014



Praise the Lord with a grateful heart!

Maastricht, April 2014

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

We commemorate the historical day of the Congregation on 29 April 2014. Celebrating this day becomes our opportunity to reflect, explore and give meaning to our spiritual experience in the Congregation, which reminds us of the event now 177 years ago. On the exact date of 29 April 1837, Mother Elisabeth Gruyters founded the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St Charles Borromeo in Maastricht. Reflection first of all starts from the history of the Congregation.

29 APRIL 1837, the Feast of St. Peter, Martyr. Notwithstanding all the comments of the people that we were poor and also that the city of Maastricht had been closed for six years, God gave the two of us courage and strength to start this work (EG 46).

The above event reveals two important things. Firstly, it describes the situation of Maastricht as a ‘closed city’. Secondly, it tells us that God granted Mother Elisabeth the grace of courage and strength to start the establishment of the Congregation.

From history we know that, at that time, the Netherlands were in crisis because of the impact of the French Revolution in Europe. The situation in Maastricht at that time is clearly described in EG 46, 51, 52, 27, and 28.

These articles show that the city of Maastricht found itself in a situation of 'chaos'. The word 'chaos' is derived from the Greek language *Xaos*, which means that the situation is chaotic and disorganized. It is in this situation of crisis that Mother Elisabeth was granted the grace of courage and strength of faith to establish the Congregation. What was the power within her that made that she dared decide to say YES to the offer or the call of God in the concrete situation of her days?

Mother Elisabeth revealed that **the Experience of God's Love** (cf. EG 39 and 41) is a power in itself. Mother Elisabeth experienced how God loved her unconditionally (cf. EG 94 and 98). Through the process of continuous discernment and prayer before God, Mother Elisabeth felt enabled to say YES to God's invitation and mission. In some other parts of her book, we can find that the process of spiritual discernment (=discretion) is always performed by Mother Elisabeth (cf. EG 8, 11, 17, 149, 150, 156).

The situation of 'chaos' or crisis at that time in Maastricht, was a field of service and of giving herself to God. Mother Elisabeth came and presented herself as a messenger of God, Who gave hope in a world of 'chaos' and crisis.

If we go back to the source of our life as followers of Christ, we can learn from the Scriptures. The prophet Isaiah gives an overview of how the mission of the Servant of God is present in the world and gives hope. This overview can be found in Isaiah 42: 3-4: "*He will not break off a bent reed or put out a flickering lamp. He will bring lasting justice to all. He will not lose hope or courage; he will establish justice on the earth...*" Although there

seems to be no hope, the mission of this prophet is to give new hope.

Matthew and Luke (cf. Mat 6: 25-34, Luke 12: 22-31) also remind us that we should not worry because God has provided what we need. Sometimes we become anxious and worried when faced with circumstances that are not clear to us or are not comfortable. The gospels of Matthew and Luke invite us to dare let go of our faith and trust in God.

How can we bring the spirit of Mother Elisabeth in our life and our mission in the society?

As religious, we are granted the grace to follow Jesus Christ more closely. We experience the love of God that is total and unconditional as Mother Elisabeth describes it in EG 94 and 98. We are invited to draw our strength from and in Jesus Christ Himself, just like Mother Elisabeth always drew her strength from Christ (cf. EG 39 and 41; John 4: 4-15).

Life as a religious is a choice as well as a witness to the people living today. We, as religious, are not only called, we are also sent. Our mission involves and takes part in God's work of salvation embodied concretely in the apostolate by serving others who are in need. We can learn from Mother Elisabeth. She was able to make the right decision and realized her mission as a prophet in her time because she was always practicing spiritual discernment and continuously praying. She opened the door and received the presence of the poor children and even took care of them physically and spiritually. Mother Elisabeth encouraged them to further evolve towards a good life and trained them with

various skills such as sewing, etc. All services rendered to the poor thus became prophetic actions of Mother Elisabeth.

We, her daughters, are sent to live out and continue to foster Mother Elisabeth's spirit amidst people living today.

May the remembrance of this historical day in the Congregation which is 29 April 2014, become an opportunity for us to make this spiritual event meaningful and may it further encourage us to put into practice our spirituality both in community life and in the apostolate entrusted to each of us.

Happy Feast Day to All of You!



MEMBERSHIP

The Province of Indonesia

Postulancy

On April 29th, 2014, two aspirants start their postulancy in our formation house in Dili-Timor Leste:

1. Manuela Andrade Da Costa, from St Jose Operario de Remixio Parish.
2. Cecilia Da Conceicao, from St Franvisco Xavier Halolia Parish.

The Region of Tanzania

Perpetual Profession of Vows

On March 25th, 2014, four Juniors made their perpetual profession of vows in the Elisabeth Community (Kolila Village-Moshi):

1. Sr Beatrice C. Mroso, from the Mashati Parish
2. Sr Bertha P. Shirima, from the Keni Parish
3. Sr Geogetha Tarimo, from the Ussery Parish
4. Sr Hildegarda Mushi, from the Kibosho Parish

We congratulate all of them with the choice they have made to become members of this Congregation. We will accompany them on their path of life with our prayers and blessings so that they will remain loyal to God's call.

LEAVING THE CONGREGATION

Sr Haryanti Sri Haryanti from the Province of Indonesia is no longer a member of the Congregation. Her petition to request an indult from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, has been granted and sent to her on a letter Prot.n. 26758/2013, dated 16 November 2013. We pray for her as she starts her new life journey outside the Congregation. We hope that she will find happiness in her life.

IN MEMORIAM

*I LOVE the Lord, because He has heard my voice
and my supplications (Ps. 116: 1)*

1. **Sr Riet- Maria Martina (Ersebeth) Bakker** was born in Aalsmeer on April 14th, 1924, made her profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Maastricht on November 14th, 1948 and passed away in Maastricht on December 27th, 2013.
2. **Sr Martino - Margaretha van de Vijfeijke** was born in Waalre on May 19th, 1918, made her profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Indonesia on February 2nd, 1941 and passed away in Maastricht on February 5th, 2014.

May God embrace them with His Love!

MISSIONARIES

1. **Sr Marivic Braganza** stayed in the Philippines from January up to March 3rd, 2014, to attend a modular class conducted by the Directors of Vocation Promoters. Afterwards she took an English course at TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages).
2. **Sr Lidwiana Purna Harjani**, from the Province of Indonesia has been sent to strengthen our community in Brazil. She left Jakarta on March 2nd, 2014. After a long journey with an overnight stay in Sao Paulo, she arrived in our community in Juazeiro, Bahia, on March 4th, 2014. We hope that she soon gets adjusted to the new situation and will be able to build up

a witnessing community together with sr Evelyn Aranas and sr Theresiata Suwarsih. Let us pray for her, that she will soon feel at home in her new mission country.

3. **Sr Odilia Sadinah** from the Carolie Community of Tanzania is on home leave in Indonesia from March 28th to May 28th of this year. We hope that she has a joyful and fruitful vacation in her homeland.
4. **Sr Xaverie Pauline Kleden** from the community of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, will go to Indonesia for her vacation on April 21st, 2014. We wish her a fruitful vacation.
5. **Sr Monicah Wairimu Mwangi** from the Region of Tanzania will go to Indonesia on April 21st, 2014, for the Exchange Junior Program.
6. **Sr Gloria Consolacion** from the Region of the Philippines, who is now in Indonesia for the Exchange Junior Program, is granted the opportunity to have an orientation in Timor Leste while in the process of extending her visa permit.
7. **Sr Yosefa Tri Retnaningsih** from the Memphis community in the U.S.A., will go on home leave to Indonesia on May 9th, 2014. We wish her an inspiring vacation with the sisters in the Province, her relatives and family.
8. **Sr Josephine Estoque** who has contributed to building up the Intercultural Stella Maris Community in Onder de Bogen, Maastricht, returned to the Region of the Philippines on April 24th, 2014. We are grateful for everything she has done and for all her efforts to realize the building up of the aforementioned community in our Mother House. We will

pray for her adjustment process in her home country and for her future assignment.

ONGOING FORMATION AND ORIENTATION

1. **Srs Goretti Wahyuningsih** and **Ignatine Udjulawa**, from the Region of East Indonesia, arrived in the Philippines on January 3rd, 2014, for their sabbatical program at the East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI) which lasted until April 12th, 2014. After the program, they were granted the opportunity to go to the communities in Davao and Musuan for orientation.
2. **Sr Krispiani Sukarwanti** from the Province of Indonesia arrived in the Philippines on January 3rd, 2014, to take a course in English at the Assumption Language Center. The program lasted until March 28th, 2014. She returned to Indonesia on March 31st, 2014.
3. **Sr Carolina Nuryati**, the Provincial Superior of the Province of Indonesia and **sr Yustiana Wiwik Iswanti**, the vice Provincial, will pay a two-week visit and orientation to Tanzania from the last week of May – June 2014. We hope that their presence in the Region will be fruitful for the Congregation.

As you all know, the Province of Indonesia is the largest Area of the Congregation now in terms of membership and apostolic ministries. Having the largest number of members, the Province continues to support other Areas in various ways. One of its contributions to the life of the Congregation is sending sisters as missionaries to other Areas. There are many

Indonesian missionaries in Tanzania at the moment and maybe other sisters will be sent to join them.

Based on this situation, the GB has invited the members of the Provincial Board of Indonesia to pay a visit to the sisters and have an orientation in the Tanzanian Region. We hope that they will have a direct encounter with the sisters and the situation in which the Region finds itself.

NEW COMMUNITY

1. The Indonesian Province has opened a new community in **Kelor, Wonosari, Yogyakarta**. When it was started, the structure of this community was part of the community of Panti Rini, Kalasan. After some time, because of the development of the community and the apostolic ministry, the Board realized that this structure is no longer ideal.

Therefore, the GB has approved the request to give this community a new status as an independent community. The apostolic ministry of the sisters of this community is in the Panti Rahayu Hospital.

We hope that the sisters can build up a witnessing community in this area and can give the best of their service to the people in need.



2. A new convent is now being built in the Region of Tanzania, in **Nyegezi, Mwanza**, to be precise. This is to respond to the need of community life for some of our sisters, who are studying at a nearby University in this area. Part of the building will become a boarding house for students, to help the Region in the process of



becoming self-reliant. The new community is going to be blessed on April 29th, 2014.

NEW APOSTOLIC MINISTRY

The Elisabeth Clinic was opened and blessed in commemoration of the World Day of the Sick, February 11th, 2014. This clinic is run by the sisters of the **Aimas community in Sorong, Papua (East Indonesian Region)**. We pray that the sisters can serve the people in need of health services in this area. We sincerely offer our deep gratitude and appreciation to all who have helped the Region with the development of this clinic.



FROM THE GENERAL BOARD

1. **Sr Maria Goretti Ola** from the Indonesian Province was transferred to the East Indonesian Region on January 15th, 2014. We hope that meanwhile she has adjusted to her new surroundings and that she feels at home in her new community and mission.

2. The New Philippine 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 observations during our visitation as well as through prayers and discernment with the sisters, the General Board has decided to assign:

- 1) Sr Maria Heddy Salvador as Regional Superior.
- 2) Sr Rachel Real as the first board member. She will substitute the Regional Superior in case of impediment or vacancy.
- 3) Sr Amelita Intervencion as the second board member.

The new Regional Board was installed on December 8th, 2013. They will serve the sisters of the Region for a term of three years up to December 7th, 2016.

We ask your prayer 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, the 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 all the members of the previous Regional Board, who finished their service, especially to sr Nerisa Jayme. To sr Heddy and sr Rachel we want to say thank you for your generosity to put yourselves up for re-election.



Sr Rachel Real, Sr Heddy Salvador, Sr Amelita Intervention

Sr Elisia Terry attended a meeting for reflection and study for all General Treasurers of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life in Rome from March 8th – 9th, 2014. The meeting was requested by the Holy Father. The topic was: *“The management of the ecclesiastical goods of Institutes of*

Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life for the service of humanity and the mission of the Church.”

We hope that the inspiration of this meeting can enrich us as we are facing our own International Treasurers Meeting.

4. **Sr Marie Jose Voeten**, who is now in charge as Director of the Designated District Hospital in Sengerema, Tanzania, will be in New York, the U.S.A., from May 5th– 11th, 2014. She will attend a meeting organized by the NGO which helps building up the catholic medical faculty in Mwanza, Tanzania. We hope that her presence will contribute to developing a better cooperation between these two institutions.

GB SCHEDULE

1. **Sr Rosaria Nur Hardiningsih** paid a visit to the community in Brazil from March 4th – 11th, 2014 and, at the same time, accompanied **sr Lidwiana Purna Harjani** who is sent there as a missionary. During this visit sr Rosaria was to meet the Bishop of Juazeiro and exchanged ideas with him on the future of our community there.
2. **Srs Jane Ann Aballe and Hetty Sriwidjajanti** visited the sisters in Norway on April 14th, 2014. They returned to Maastricht on April 23rd, 2014.
3. **Sr Rosaria Nur Hardiningsih** will attend a UISG Constellation meeting in Dublin, Ireland from May 6th – 9th 2014. We hope it will prove to be a fruitful meeting for all the participants.
4. **Sr Lisbeth Cicih Ratwasih** will go to Vietnam and the Philippines in May 2014.

Kind regards,
On behalf of the General Board



Sr Rosaria Nurhardiningsih
General Superior