

Basic Letter



April 2017

Maastricht, April 2017

“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)

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

Prayerful greetings on this feast of the Foundation of the Congregation!

Today we celebrate the 180th anniversary of the founding of our Congregation. By celebrating this anniversary, we direct our grateful memory to the Lord, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of the universe for His incredible initiative in bringing to life on April 29, 1837 our Congregation. We should not forget that our Congregation was born from a great and ardent desire of a modest and ordinary woman, Mother Elisabeth Gruyters, who felt moved to serve God faithfully and knew that this only would get shaped in serving others.

Remembering the life and ministry of Mother Elisabeth we realize how she was fascinated by the person of Jesus Christ Crucified, continuously and untiringly allowed herself to be led by the Holy Spirit and sought to touch God’s love and compassion which she recognized through those who were experiencing suffering and distress in her society. This is the

gift left to us by our Foundress, a precious legacy which, still today, we intend to receive and preserve with deep gratitude, responsibility and commitment.

Therefore, we believe that this is also an opportunity to give thanks to God for the gift of the Spirit who worked in the heart of Mother Elisabeth and our predecessors and in the lives of many of us, who - with the spirit of joy and simplicity - succeeded in carrying out the spirituality of the Congregation by offering our lives in the mission and for the mission, wherever we are. What we mean by mission is a way of life which we express through our relationship with God in our community and ministries and not merely our activities or works. Mission is God's love that shaped our lives as religious persons. When we lack love we will easily become tired, feel overloaded, exhausted and unhappy. In celebrating this jubilee we are invited to deepen our charismatic roots and express our love and gratitude to our Foundress. We want to attune ourselves to the spirit of our Foundress. The same Spirit who moved Mother Elisabeth to found the Congregation calls us, too, today to share God's love and compassion, and binds us into one family with the richness of the ever increasing diversity of our Sisters worldwide.

We realize that we are the ones continuing God's mission entrusted to her. Our presence in eleven countries, with different cultures and languages, in small and big communities and in different phases of lives and situations as well as in its diversity of giftedness and variety of ministries, has been a great contribution to the Church and society. We were and are blessed daily by the invisible hand of God (cf. EG 63). We experience the great Love of God throughout the life and

history of the Congregation. This is what we are celebrating and are grateful for: that we, as individuals and communities, despite our shortcomings, may participate in carrying forward the history/tradition of the Congregation and, more importantly, are chosen by God to receive His mission, to become a sign of love and to witness to God's Kingdom that is coming among us in our daily life (cf. Const. 40). Therefore, we not only inherit instructive and uplifting tradition, but we also build new models and new ways of living out the Charism of the Congregation in accordance with the signs of the times and contextual situations.

When we look back at the history of our Congregation, we can see all the accomplishments that the Congregation achieved from time to time, from one generation to another. We can appreciate the great works we have done through our ministries. It gives us a good feeling to note that our members and communities, in certain periods of time, increased significantly. We reached up to almost 1,820 members in the 1960s and were able to send Sisters to serve as missionaries inside and outside the country. It is recorded even that up until now there have been more than 3,000 women who entered in our Congregation. Nevertheless we also realize the pain, the hardship and even the crisis that we had to go through, which is crucial for our history, i.e. lack of members and facilities, declining and aging number of Sisters, closing down of some of our ministries and communities. Above all, we are deeply concerned with our fragility as human beings; that we sometimes fail to keep alive the meaning of our identity as consecrated persons.

This is the real challenge that we experience today, which can give rise to a new *kairos*, a time of grace. In this challenge lies a hidden and authentic call of the Holy Spirit to rediscover the wealth and potentialities of this form of life. Spend some time thinking about that and ask yourself what is God asking of you. Are we – like our Foundress – open to the action of the Holy Spirit? Are we unafraid to involve ourselves with everyday life and with people’s problems? Do we nurture in our heart amazement and fascination at the encounter with the Christ who calls us? Do we, as Mother Elisabeth, have in our heart a healthy restlessness for the Lord as well as a living desire to bring Him to others? These questions remind us that, as consecrated persons, we are called that God might live in us and guide us to love with Him, in Him, and just as He loves.

May this celebration awaken a feeling of freshness, give a new hope and become a drive for renewal both at the individual and at the community level. Let us help each other improve our service to others, our relationship as sisters, and our relationship with Christ and His holy Church. Like Mother Elisabeth, today we may also say *“It is out of gratitude that I related all this because God showered so many graces upon me in this house and called me to religious life; at the same time He used me as an instrument in His hands to found this convent. May His Name be blessed forever and ever. Amen.”* (EG 44)

Happy Feast Day!



MEMBERSHIP

INDONESIAN PROVINCE

Postulancy

On April 29th 2017, five aspirants were accepted as postulant and started their formation in the Formation House in Dili – Timor Leste.

1. Manuela Sousa de Jesus from Manaloba Maubesse
2. Madalena Casimiro Lopes from Hahimau Maubesse
3. Fransisca Ximenes from Poetete Ermera
4. Juvita Soares Barreto from Gleno Ermera
5. Balbina Soares Tilman from Samalete Ermera

TANZANIAN REGION

Postulancy

There are 5 Aspirants who will proceed to the next step of their formation to Postulancy on April 29. They are:

1. Editha Otto Lekule from The Holy Spirit Parish, the Diocese of Moshi (Tanzania)
2. Francisca Arumba from St Joseph Shibuye Parish, the Diocese of Kakamega (Kenya)
3. Grace Eligi Matemu from Himo Parish, the Diocese of Moshi (Tanzania)
4. Jackline Mabimbi Moto Nega from St. John Paul II Nyankumbu Parish, the Diocese of Geita (Tanzania)
5. Sophia Daniel from St Joseph Parish Ndala, the Archdiocese of Tabora (Tanzania)

PHILIPPINE REGION

Postulancy

On April 29th 2017, two Vietnamese aspirants will start their postulancy:

1. Nguyen Thi Phuong from Xuan Duc Parish
2. Dao Thi Phuong Nhi from Vin Huong Parish

First Profession

On Nov. 4, 2016 three Vietnames Novices had their first profession in Tagaytay, the Philippines:

1. Sr Nguyen Thi Luc
2. Sr Dong Thi Oanh
3. Sr Nguyen Thi Thao

They are all from Middle of Vietnam.

In Memoriam

1. **Sr Borromeo Soemirah**, was born in Ambarawa, Central Java on November 6th, 1924, had her Perpetual Profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo on July 27th, 1954 and passed away in Panti Rapih Hospital Yogyakarta on October 25th, 2016.



2. **Sr Berthilia Maria Hendrika Wolfkamp**, was born in Raalte on October 18th, 1931, and entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Maastricht on October 9th, 1955. She passed away in Nijmegen on October 27th, 2016.



- 3. Sr Milburga Larasati**, was born in Kebumen, Central Java on November 19th, 1938, her Perpetual Profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo on February 1st, 1967. She passed away in Panti Rapih Hospital, Yogyakarta on November 30th, 2016.



- 4. Sr Bernadet Sukartini**, born in Ambarawa, Central Java on September 5th, 1947, had her final profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo on July 19th, 1987, passed away on December 30th, 2016



- 5. Sr Vincention Sumarah**, born in Klaten, Central Java on April 19th, 1928, had her final Profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo on July 26th, 1956. She passed away on January 31st, 2017 in Panti Rapih Hospital Yogyakarta.



- 6. Sr Imeldino Adriana Matthea Roelen**, was born in Bloemendaal on September 11th, 1917, and entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Maastricht on May 16th, 1941. She passed away in Maastricht on February 12th, 2017.



7. Sr Fatma Barros Florindo, born in Ermera, Timor Leste



on January 10th, 1969, had her final profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo on November 5th, 2000. She passed away in Panti Rapih Hospital Yogyakarta on February 17th, 2017.

8. Sr Adriana Antonia Cornelia van de Ven, was born in



Uden on April 4th, 1923, and entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Maastricht on May 11th, 1948. She passed away in Heerlen ‘Bergweide’ on February 20th, 2017.

9. Sr Longina Suratmi, was born in Wates, Kulon Progo on A



August 18th, 1927, had her final profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo on February 2th, 1955. She passed away in Panti Rapih Hospital Yogyakarta on March 19th, 2017.

10. Sr. Antonia Tri Hartati was born in Cilacap, Central Java



on 19th Juli 1933, had her perpetual profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo on 31th January 1961. She passed away in Panti Rapih Hospital Yogyakarta on April 6th 2017.

NEWS FROM OUR MISSIONARIES

1. Sr Marivic Braganza from Vietnam arrived in the Philippines on December 7, 2016 to undergo her medical treatment. Thanks be to God that treatment went on very well. Now she is in the process of recovery in the community. In addition to this, she is accompanying two Vietnamese aspirants who arrived a few weeks ago in the Philippines. She visited her mother last March 24 – April 5, before she goes back to Vietnam May 8, 2017.
2. Sr Ancillia Sus Indrati from Memphis Community of USA took her sabbatical program at the Institute of St Anselm in UK taking up Psycho Spiritual Course starting September 2016 – March 12, 2017
3. Sr Carolie Hartati from Silver Spring Community of the United States of America is now in Indonesia for good. She left USA on December 17, 2016 and was given opportunity to visit the Mother House in Maastricht before going back to her own country, Indonesia. We thank her for pioneering the presence of the CB Sisters in the USA. She had been the coordinator in the Unit of USA for 25 years. She arrived in Indonesia on January 4, 2017. Welcome back home sister!
4. Sr Yovita Waryati from Tanzania will have her home vacation in Indonesia starting May 5 and comes back on July 5, 2017. We hope that she will have a good time with her family and relatives and also with the fellow-sisters in the Province. After her vacation she will still come back to Tanzania to do her mission with much vigor.
5. Sr Xaverie Kleden who gives herself to Tanzania Region for about 30 years is now ready to go back to her homeland in

Indonesia. We thank her for sharing her life for the mission in Tanzania for this long period of time. She herself is very happy serving the people in Tanzania. She had grown together with the people she encountered in her ministry. We wish her a happy life in her own country and be at home soon in her new community.

Thank you very much Sr Xaverie!

6. Sr Elisia Terry from the Netherlands Province is now in Indonesia for her vacation. She will spend her time for family bonding, on-going formation, spiritual renewal and also in time to be with her batch mate during formation years to celebrate together their 25th anniversary as member of the Congregation. She left March 3 from Maastricht and will come back on May 3, 2017.

NEWS FROM THE GENERAL BOARD

1. The three newly Vietnamese professed sisters: Srs Anna Nguyen Thi Thao, Anna Nguyen Thi Luc and Anna Maria Dong The Oanh went to Vietnam last year in December for their vacation. They were happy to visit their families for the first time after they came to the Philippines to start their formation. They went home for their vacation after their first profession and are now back in the Philippines since February 14.

2. New Regional Board of The Philippines Region

Sr Lisbeth and Sr Jane Ann as representatives of the General Board have done communities and ministries visitation to the Philippine Region. It was also at the same time consultation with the sisters in preparation for their Regional

Chapter and the appointment of new leaders for the Region. Together with the sisters in the Regional Chapter, the GB closely felt the concerns and developments of the Region. From these realities, decisions and recommendations were decided upon by the delegates of the Chapter and are expected to be realized through the management of the new Board.

Based on our Constitution # 144 and after consulting the sisters, the GB has decided that the term of office for the Board is 4 years; that is from December 8, 2016 to December 7, 2020.

The new Regional Superior is sr Rachel Real and her Board are: sr Rosalee Maliga who will take over the work of the Regional Superior in case of impediment or vacancy (Cons. 140) and Sr. Josephine Estoque, the 2nd member.



(Standing from left to right: Srs Rosalee, Rachel and Josephine)

Congratulations to the sisters of the Philippines Region and good luck to the new Regional Board. We accompany them with our prayers.

3. On January 20th, 2017 Sr Hetty Sriwidjajanti went to Indonesia to accompany her mother who was very sick. Her presence was timely as after some procedures taken for the best of her mother, together with her family and relatives, they laid her mother to rest in peace. After all the preparations done to her mother, we believe that the everlasting life promised by The Father is granted to her mother. She and her family were thankful to all the CB sisters who in one way or another were around during those times of bereavement. Sr Hetty returned to Maastricht on February 20th thankful of the whole process of letting go.
4. On February 20th, 2017 Srs Rosaria and Lisbeth travelled to Indonesia to attend the Indonesian Province during its provincial Chapter which was carried out from February 26th – March 6th. In addition to the chapter, on March 14th – 16th, Sr Lisbeth paid a visit to the sisters in Timor Leste. They returned to the Netherlands on March 20th, 2017.
5. Pilgrimage Program for our Indonesian Province's Mission Partner.

From May 7 – 13, 2017, there are ten (10) people; nine (9) lay and one (1) priest and two sisters will join the Pilgrimage Program on the footsteps of Mother Elisabeth in Leut, Maastricht and its surrounding. These 10 people have dedicated themselves to the development of the ministry of the Congregation in Indonesia Province through their involvement as member of health care, education, and social-pastoral foundations in Indonesia. They will join the program from 7 to 13 May, 2017. We hope this program

will strengthen our collaboration in sharing the spirituality of Mother Elisabeth in our apostolic ministries.

The participants of the Pilgrimage are:

- 1) Fr Justinus Sudarminta, SJ
- 2) Mr Djoko Satriyo
- 3) Mrs Sri Haryaningsih
- 4) Mr Hani Handoko
- 5) Mr Henricus Priyosulistyo
- 6) Mr Yohanes Bambang Kristianto
- 7) Mr Thomas Suyatno
- 8) Mr Joko Nugroho
- 9) Mrs Retnowati Iskandar
- 10) Mr Robby Hermanto Winardi
- 11) Sr Marie Yose Tri Sundari, CB
- 12) Sr Sofia Gusnia Saragih, CB

6. The Schedule of the first Area's Chapter as preparation for the General Chapter

- 1) The Dutch Province: February 12th – 17th, 2017
- 2) The Indonesian Province: February 26th – March 6th, 2017
- 3) The Tanzanian Region: February 21st – 26th, 2017
- 4) The Philippines Region: December 3rd – 8th, 2016
- 5) The East Indonesian Region: March 13th – 14th, 2017

7. The Areas' Delegates to the General Chapter

- 1) The Dutch Province
 1. Sr Guiseppo Jonkman (ex-officio)
 2. Sr Vincenza Pranawanti
 3. Sr Paulie Douven
 - 4.

- 2) The Indonesian Province
 1. Sr Carolina Nuryati (ex-officio)
 2. Sr Dwina Arintowati
 3. Sr Evarista Setyawati Murnining Tyas
 4. Sr Yustiana Wiwik Iswanti
 5. Sr Krispiani Sukarwanti
 6. Sr Sofia Gusnia Saragih
 7. Sr Maria Elly Budiarti

- 3) The Tanzanian Region
 1. Sr Esther Muharami (ex-officio)
 2. Sr Odilia Sadinah
 3. Sr Marie Jose Voeten
 4. Sr Floriana Livianus Swai

- 4) The Philippines Region:
 1. Sr Rachel Real (ex-officio)
 2. Sr Cecil Perlas
 3. Sr Josephine Estoque

- 5) The East Indonesian Region:
 1. Sr Taviana (ex-officio)
 2. Sr Annuncianes Muda
 3. Sr Goretti Wahyuningsih

- 6) Units:
 1. Sr Pauline Sundari (Norway)
 2. Sr Theresiata Suwarsih (Brazil)
 3. Sr Mariani Winingsih (Belgium)
 4. Sr Yosefa Tri Retnaningsih (USA)
 5. Sr Virgilia Mascariñas (Vietnam)

LATEST DEVELOPMENT

1. Indonesian Province

a) *Apostolic Ministry*

The Provincial Board is in the process of preparing the community in Timor Leste to have autonomous status in its structure and governance in the future. One of the big plans is to develop the apostolic ministry in this area. After a long process the Board has managed to upgrade the kindergarten into a 9-year standard of primary education school in Timor Leste. The building for this primary school was blessed in December 8th, 2016, by the Bishop Virgilio do Cormo da Silva



and attended by the Minister of Education of Timor Leste, Antonio da Conceicao. Congratulations to the sisters in the Province and especially the sisters in Timor Leste. We hope that this ministry can be the

place to plant good seeds to the children, the future of the Church in Timor Leste.

b) *Community*

As a consequence of the development of the education ministry in Timor Leste, the Board had to put up a new community for the sisters who are assigned to manage the primary school. A new community was formally blessed and started in December 08, 2016, at Maleuana, Dili. The first members are Sr Imelda Nadeak as the local superior and at the same time the sister in

charge of the education ministry, sr Bertha and sr Leticia. Congratulation to the sisters in Indonesia Province and especially the sisters in Timor Leste. We hope that the community can realize the dream of Mother Elisabeth to present the Kingdom of God in the society.

2. The Closing down of Silver Spring Community

After a long process of discernment, the Congregation had to let go our Elisabeth community in Silver Spring, Maryland, the United States of America. After 26 (twenty six) years of serving the Church and society, the community was officially closed in 29 November 2016. After the closing, Sr Carolie, went back to Indonesia. Sr Vicmarie, still had to stay for about 6 (six) months as to wait all the process of selling and closing the corporate of the community completely done. Afterward, she is given the opportunity to take her sabbatical period.

We thank all the sisters who have taken part in building up this community. In a special way, we express our gratitude to sr Carolie and sr Vicmarie, the last members of this community. They got involved closely in the process. They felt the pain of letting go the community so dear to their hart. We hope that all the experiences of the process have become a valuable ongoing formation for them.

Kind regards,
on behalf of the General Board,



Sr Rosaria Nur Hardiningsih
General Superior

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