

Maastricht, August 2014

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

Celebrating Assumption day reminds us always of the life of Mary and Mother Elisabeth in their intimate union with God. These two women, who had big roles and became models for us as religious, continue to inspire and challenge us.

A year ago, together, we reflected the images of these two women in our lives. Their spirituality was very simple: both heard the word of God and put them into action. Mary was chosen by God in order to realize through her the work of salvation. This required a 'Yes'. Without her free and total cooperation, nothing would have happened. She heard the Angel's greeting: "... *you are highly favoured among women....the Lord is with you*" (Lk 1:28). Her childlike faith and response to the angel's message: "... *behold I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word.*" (Lk 1:38). In the case of Mother Elisabeth, seeing the situation of her surroundings and after many years of silent supplication, entrusted her desires to God: "... *my faith grew deeper and my hope stronger and a burning love attended by sweet tears granted me a peaceful rest...; and suddenly I heard the blessed "yes" from Heaven and that 'yes' was no other than this: "all things will come"* (EG 6). Their '**Yes**' changed their life forever. They were firm and able to overcome the trials encountered daily because of God's faithfulness and love to them and their personal response to Him (mystical experience).

As we go on, let us call to mind our individual 'Yes', the moment particularly when we answered His invitation to enter the convent. The first 'Yes' we uttered during our first profession in the midst

of our sisters, families and the faithful people. Then recall also our daily response to Him from that moment, and the many inspirations and challenges as we lived-by our life.

This time we will continue our reminiscence of these two women in our life, taking into consideration their journey of faith and put emphasis now on the responses through their deeds/action: **their Prophetic Journey**. From their intense experience of the Father, they come out with a sense of mission from Him and express it in a life of compassionate service.

When Mary said her ‘yes’ to the invitation of God through the Angel and when Mother Elisabeth started the Congregation, both women faced challenges on their day to day life. Theirs was not a life free from stress. Let us journey with Mary when she was with Jesus, following him, his beloved son on the way as if He was her mission. She was always there with him even when sometimes she did not understand the responses and reactions of Jesus like when she and Joseph were looking for him: *“Son why have you treated us like this?.....I have been anxiously searching for you” (Lk 2:48)* and the answer of the twelve years old Jesus to her, *“...did you not know that I was in my father’s house?” (Lk 2:49)*. Sometimes you need not say many things but just to keep quiet as Mary did. In the wedding at Cana: *“...woman, why do you involve me.....my time has not yet come.” (Jn 2:4)* but Mary continued, *“....do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:5)*. There were many other instances in the Bible relating Mary’s deep relationship with the Father as she journeyed with Jesus and how she was challenged along the way. How would she felt then being with Jesus on his way to crucifixion and then to resurrection? She pondered all these in her heart as she entrusted everything to God. Her communion with Him makes her response to His will according to the signs of the time. This made her faith grow stronger.

Mother Elisabeth's life too was not always a bed of roses. There were always a fight between the ego and the will of God. She too experienced being humiliated "... *van Vloten ...flung a scornful remarks at me....*" (EG 110), downtrodden with the experienced in Sittard when "... *several sisters have been relieved or moved....*" (EG 158), but also felt grateful and happy "... *the number of sisters were increasing as well as the various works of Charity. Daily experience and a great desire for spiritual progress that went with it... as we were blessed daily by the invisible hand of God*" (EG 63). We got an image from her life story that she was always in communion with God for whatever actions she did and put her trust in Him. She was always in consultation to whatever decisions and actions she was making.

Possibly, you too experienced a colourful life since the last time you answered His invitation. You have seen your dreams made a detour. The future looks different as what was planned by you. You need to recognize that your prophetic walk with God is a unique journey. Like Mary, you will have period of prophetic disclosure; time of desolation; weariness; time of ministerial success, etc. All of them seemingly lead to the cross and to the death of all things you hold dear. Are you willing to continue to sacrifice yourself in order to make God's plan a reality in you?

Prophetic Journey

Mary and Mother Elisabeth were totally certain that in order to live in a balance way, prayer and action must be in harmony. Prayer separated from action can create an illusion of sanctity. It can be a form of avoidance. Action separated from prayer is superficial. Spirituality is at its best when there is a mutual and vital balance between prayer and action. How is this being transpired in our realities today?

Let us see our world which is for the past years and up to this time is facing financial crisis. We heard that many companies and institutions were suffering. News like workers being laid off from their jobs, crimes, robberies, etc. are the effects of it. These are all part of the system that if one is “not in order” the rest are affected. There is chaos around. This fact affected our Congregation as well. We are asked to unite ourselves to find a way out to respond to this reality individually, communally and as a Congregation as a whole. In a concrete way, this involves a re-evaluation of our lifestyles and the abandoning of our individualistic attitude. Areas and units are asked to unite together and find ways together to do something in this situation.

In 2010, we held our first international meeting for all the treasurers and their board in all the areas where our sisters are. We discussed and discerned together the financial crisis that affected our congregation. Last month, from July 1 to 18, a second gathering of all the treasurers and their board of the areas and units, as well as the sisters who serve in financial department in their apostolic ministry were called again. This time we gathered to strengthen and deepened in a concrete way our being steward in order to face our present and future situation of the Congregation.

Like Mary, our prophetic voice must be heard if we are to “bring down the powerful from their thrones and lift up the lowly” (Lk 1:52). In speaking the prophetic word, we hold together the task of re-evaluating, energizing and invite the sisters in the Areas to see/confront and find ways together to uplift our situations. Everyone is challenged to be a good steward as we go about how to improve our resources. We also not forget to help the people we live and work with. The call is to let everyone experience the outpouring love of God. Hopefully our prophetic word and action can let people experience the caring and gracious presence of God

in their lives, everyone to whom we have given to care for in our life through the apostolate of the Congregation.

As followers of Mary and Mother Elisabeth, we have to be conscious and develop the pilgrimage of our life from contemplation to action. We have to start anew down the road.

Happy last day to you all!

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 24th, 2014 there was a group of women who were brave enough to answer the call for First profession and Final vows. It was held in the Maria Bintang Samodra Chapel in the Provincialate of Indonesia, Jl. Kolombo 19, Yogyakarta. We pray

for their courage and strength to continue to give witness in their daily life of the spirituality of Mother Elisabeth. May they be in constant surrender to God's will.

The Sisters for **First Profession:**

1. Sr Nicoline is from the parish of St John Rasul, Kedaton, Bandar, Lampung
2. Sr Rachela is from the parish of St Clement, Mandonga, Sulawesi Tenggara.

The Sisters for **Final Profession:**

1. Sr Desilva Abuk from the St Peter and Paul Parish, Taunbaen Oenali, Kefamenanu.
2. Sr Yosita Sri Murtini from the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of Christ Parish, Gunung Kidul, Central Java.
3. Sr Paulisa Suparti the St Andrew Parish, Marga Agung, Southern Lampung, Sumatra.
4. Sr Lidwina Supeni from the Christ the King Parish, Suka Putih, OKI, South Sumatra.
5. Sr Marlisa Nursulis Setyowati from the Most Gracious God Parish, Sugihwaras, MUBA, South Sumatra.

B. Philippine Region

One of the junior sisters in the Philippine Region, Sr Cheryl Ebarial was full of spirit to answer the call to Religious life forever. She had her Final profession August 15th, 2014 at the CB retreat house chapel in Davao City. She will continue her recent assignment which was in the Retreat House of Tagaytay.

C. East Indonesian Region

Two Postulants from Kupang, East Indonesia received their habit and started their Novitiate on August 15th. We pray for their perseverance and courage to continue to another stage of their formation as Novice. The two sisters are:

1. Sr Rensilinda Julita from Manggarai, East Nusa Tenggara.
2. Sr Maria Lusia Helyanan from Maluku.

In Memoriam

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

1. The death of **Sr Coelina Houkes** is a loss of a precious pearl in the community, she passed away on May 6th 2014. Her modesty, the peace she radiated, and her extensive generosity graced her. She had the gift of being able to really listen. When an opinion was called for, she would do so cautiously. During the accomplishment of her administrative task, no matter where, sister Coelina always performed her work correctly, humbly and meticulously.
2. **Sr Agnes Bosch**, once a member of the Provincial Board of the Netherlands died on June 3rd, 2014. The sisters remembered her as a loving, affectionate, compassionate, and faithful sister. Psalm 23, the Good Shepherd was one of her favourite-guide passages of the bible. She was really witnessing the attitude of a good shepherd as the sisters (young and old; including the Asian sisters) remembered her. We believe that she is now in the community of Mother Elisabeth in Heaven.
3. **Sr Eugenio Linawati** from Indonesia died May 1st 2014. Sister Eugenio was known as a sister of ‘Little Speech’,

calmness, simplicity, diligence, tidiness, and thoughtfulness to others. She did not like talking about other people. She was self-supporting. Whatever she could do by herself, she would. She tried not to bother other people. She fulfilled her mission assignment with all her heart and never complained. In spite of her illness, she attempted to accept the limitations of her physical condition.

4. **Sr Clemenza Siti Marinah** from Indonesia died May 26th, 2014 at the age of 84 years old. She was mostly assigned in the health ministry and a great worker of the Congregation in Indonesia when she was in her prime age. She was friendly, simple, joyful, disciplined and a grateful sister. Her discerning attitude, balancing her prayer and ministry activities made her a compassionate worker of God.

News from the Missionaries

1. Sr Josephine Estoque assigned in the Netherlands, has moved back to the Philippines for good. She is now in Musuan Community, Bukidnon, Philippines. She helps in the pastoral work of the sisters and in taking care of the aspirants. We thank her for sharing her life as a missionary in the Netherlands.
2. Sr Virgilia Mascarinas from Vietnam arrived in the Philippines last May 25th to prepare for her visa to the Netherlands. While waiting for her papers, she had her 8 days retreat in Tagaytay. After the Treasurers meeting, she had her vacation. We hope that she is revitalized for her ministry in Vietnam.

3. Sr Waryati went home to Indonesia for her vacation June 5th and went back to Tanzania on August 8th, 2014. We pray that her holiday energized her as she continues to share her apostolic presence in our mission in Tanzania.
4. Sr Yulita from the Dutch Province left the Netherlands July 22nd, 2014 for her vacation in Indonesia. She will be back on September 30th this year. We hope and pray that her time bonding with her family, friends and our sisters in Indonesia will be fruitful and meaningful. We look forward to welcome her back to the Netherlands full of inspiration with a new spirit.
5. Sr Mariani Winingsih from Leut went to Indonesia for her vacation last July 16th, 2014 and will be back on September 16th, 2014. We hope that she will have a joyful and fruitful reunion with her family, friends and our Sisters in her native land.
6. Sr Hedwig Wigi Astuti who is assigned in the Netherlands in the Multicultural Community will go back to Indonesia for good 23rd August, 2014. She will have her new assignment back in her native land. We thank her for sharing her apostolic presence in our mission in the Netherlands.

News from the General Board

1. **Orientation in the Region of Tanzania.** Sr Carolina Nuryati, the Provincial superior of Indonesia together with Sr Yustiana Wiwik Iswanti were already back home to Indonesia after some weeks of orientation in the Region of Tanzania. We hope that their experience in the said country

will broaden their knowledge, inspire them in their service and help them in fostering unity and solidarity among sisters.

2. **Aspirants from Vietnam.** Three aspirants from Vietnam went to the Philippines for their formation. They arrived there August 1st, 2014. Let us pray for courage and faith that they will persevere in their chosen vocation.
3. **Proficiency in English Language.** Sr Yustiana Wiwik Iswanti one of the members of the Provincial Board in Indonesia and Sr Emi Beda Tupen from East Indonesia arrived in Manila last June 27th, 2014 to learn and be proficient in English. Next to the English language, it is also an orientation for Sr Yustiana in the Philippines. Sr Emi on the other hand is preparing herself for the exchange junior program in Tanzania.
4. **Missionaries for Tanzania.** Sr Hildegardis Hayon together with Sr Emyliana both from the Indonesian Province arrived in Tanzania August 8th, 2014. Sr Hildegardis was sent by the Province to work as a missionary there. We hope and pray that her presence in this mission country be blessed by God. Sr Emyliana on the other hand is sent to Tanzania as a 'share' of the Province to the junior exchange program of the General Board.
5. **Study House in the Philippines.** The General Consultative Body Meeting 2013 held in Indonesia, supported the idea to establish a Study House in the Philippines. The goals are to build a sense of unity and internationality among our sisters and to facilitate the sisters with their profession as preparation for their ministry. The Study House



Project 4, Quezon City, Philippines was officially opened with a Eucharistic celebration last June 2nd, 2014. At present, there are 6 (2 Junior Vietnamese sisters, 2 Filipino sisters, and 1 Indonesian sister) members of the community, with Sr Nerisa as the local superior.

6. **Elisabeth Community, Aimas, Sorong - Papua.** For many years, our sisters in Aimas, Sorong lived in a house in the compound of the church in the Area owned by the Diocese. Now a new building was constructed for them in the land owned by the Congregation. The blessing of the new building, Elisabeth Convent was on June 26th, 2014 by Mgr.



Hilarion Datus Lega, the Bishop of Manokwari of Sorong Diocese. Now, together with Mother Elisabeth they can truly say: “Come now and see for yourself, for now we have our... convent with the help of God” (EG. 56).

7. **Sr Lisbeth is having her Vacation in Indonesia.** Her vacation started last July 31st and she will be back in Maastricht on October 26th, 2014. Part of her vacation is to be spent in the preparation and accompaniment of the sisters who will join the Leadership Program that will start

the first week of September. It will be held in Tagaytay, the Philippines.

8. **Treasurers Meeting on July 1st to 18th, 2014**

An assembly of the sisters from the different Areas responsible for financial matters was gathered in the Mother House in Maastricht, Netherlands July 1st to 18th, 2014. Together with them as participants from the Dutch Province were Mr Frank Pijpers and Mr Ton Raaijmakers. The two gentlemen were at the same time the resource persons. They introduced, updated and taught the sisters some skills in Computer Based Accounting System and reporting.

“Unity and Solidarity towards Fullness of Life” was the theme of the meeting. The role of being a steward was tackled in the meeting. They were given time for a day of silence to deepen their experience as a woman called in the leadership/as a treasurer.

Another resource person, Sr Valsa Koreth, JMJ shared her experiences and expertise on Stewardship in the service. Her input inspired the sisters to face the important roles and responsibilities entrusted to them. The meeting was a good venue too to share their concerns and challenges, strengths and difficulties, hopes and dreams in the ministry. Before the end of the meeting, a plan of action was made by each areas, for them to do. We hope the best for everyone. Thank you sisters for involving yourselves in the process!

The participants of the gathering were:

a. General Board

1. Sr Rosaria Nur Hardiningsih
2. Sr Lisbeth Cicik Ratwasih
3. Sr Jane Ann Aballe
4. Sr Hetty Sri Widjajanti

b. General Treasurer: Sr Elisia Terry Novaria Mulijadi

c. Dutch Province

1. Sr Angelica van Valkengoed
2. Sr Blanda Lases
3. Mr Frank Pijpers
4. Mr Ton Raaijmakers

d. Indonesian Province

1. Sr Krispiani Sukarwanti
2. Sr Franka Sri Kustini
3. Sr Rita Thomas
4. Sr Valentina Sri Mulyani

e. Tanzanian Region

1. Sr Bernadetha Charles Kessy
2. Sr Reni Susi Ngadi
3. Sr Inviolata Patrick Kimathy

f. Philippine Region

1. Sr Maria Heddy Salvador
2. Sr Amelita Intervencion

g. East Indonesian Region

1. Sr Veni Muda Geroe
2. Sr Elisia Listiati Tjahaja

h. Unit of USA Sr Ancilia Sus Indrati

- i. **Unit of Norway** Sr Pauline Endang Sundari
- j. **Unit of Belgium** Sr Karita Suharti
- k. **Unit of Brazil** Sr Theresiata Suwarsih
- l. **Unit of Vietnam** Sr Virgilia Mascarinas

9. *“Formation is first and foremost a common process of deepening our faith and of forming our conscience, so that with our spiritual gifts and talents we become more capable of entering more deeply into the mystery of Christ life, death and resurrection and expressing our faith in accordance with the spirituality of the Congregation.” (Const. 72)*

The above statement recognizes the importance of having leaders who exemplify the values of Mother Elisabeth. In the General Chapter the body decides that the General Board continues to prepare future leaders and facilitate the on-going formation of those who are already in positions of leadership, be in the community or in the ministry. With this, a Leadership Formation Program will take place in the Philippines starting September 1st until November 23rd, 2014.

The participants are:

Indonesian Province:

- a. Sr Francis Romala Sri Winarti
- b. Sr Roosidetta Ni Nyoman Rusmiati
- c. Sr Marisa Nur Trisna
- d. Sr Hania Manahen

Tanzanian Region:

- a) Sr Christina Mapunda
- b) Sr Lucrecia Dismas Njau

