



Maastricht, June 2017

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

A very warm greeting to all of you,

Observing the anniversary on which a family member or other significant person died is very important to all of us. Every culture, nation, race and religious tradition has its own way to commemorate the death of their loved one (s). For some it might be a solemn celebration, but for others a lot of rituals to be followed. Some celebrate through community prayer service, but others celebrate it individually and in silence. Whatever way people do, this commemoration help people to cope with grief, pain or even anger over the loss of their loved one (s). It gives us also many lessons for instance that life comes in packages: life-death, babies–old age, healthy-sick, etc. We cannot open our arms to one and reject the other. We must somehow, learn to embrace both.

Today, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June, the Congregation puts special attention to remember with gratitude the death of our Foundress, Mother Elisabeth Gruyters. We give thanks for all that she has done and meant to us, personally and communally, to the Church and society. She passed away 153 years ago, but her Spirit continues to be with us and guides us on the journey

of our lives and the life of the Congregation. Her death does not separate our relationship with her. Her Spirit is alive through us who are inspired by her Charism and called to this Congregation to dedicate ourselves to God faithfully by serving others, especially those who are experiencing miseries and distress in our society.

Every day we read and hear the news about the situations of our society. Regrettably most of them are telling about bad news in different parts of the world, far and near. These, on the one hand, make us worried, afraid, sad or powerless, but on the other hand, they make us more connected with and care for one another. As human beings we are responsible to care for humanity. We express our concerns for others for instance through prayers, words of encouragement, and alms giving and works of charity which is not only meaningful for them but also brings in us an inner strength and deep satisfaction. Through this our relationship with each other is strengthened, not because we feel better, more powerful or well-off, but because we want to show our compassion and concern for others as exemplified by Mother Elisabeth.

Mother Elisabeth was moved with compassion to the people in her surroundings: the dying Mrs. Nijpels, the poor children, women, the orphans, the sick and the suffering in Calvarieberg. She ministered the people unconditionally and with passion which gave

hope to those whom she served. She was like a lighted candle in darkness. In her simplicity, we are inspired and moved to be like her.

In Luke 10: 25 – 37, the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus depicted the good Samaritan who despites of his business showed his concern to the wounded man by giving him something to drink, binding his wound, bringing him to the inn and instructing the owner to take care of him and promised that he would return for the payment.

We are pilgrims of this earth. In our journey we encounter people who are suffering, in difficulties, in need and in fear. They might be our families, fellow sisters, co-workers or neighbors. It can happen that we cannot immediately recognize what is hidden deep inside the people we encounter daily. How then can we help if we are preoccupied with our own self, not reaching out and bowing down, to ‘the heart to heart level of encounter’, so that we can feel what they feel, be with them and show our compassion?

It seems it is easy, but in reality the negative experiences hinder us to care for others spontaneously. We need graces from God to help us to own our ‘being a beloved of God’ so that we can be a resurrected person for others. Only then we can conquer our own ‘death experience’ in our lives and together with Mother Elisabeth dare to say “that to the world we servants be” (EG 39).

## Happy Feast Day



**oriam**

1. **Sr. Rafael Margaretha op den Kelder**, born in Sijbekarspel on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1929, made her profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo in Maastricht on May 6, 1951. She passed away in Heerlen 'Bergweide' on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

2. **Sr. Simona Henrica Grada Maria Donderwinkel**, born in Lichtenvoorde on November 10, 1934, made her profession in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo

in Maastricht on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1961. She passed away in Heerlen 'Bergweide' on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

## **News from our Missionaries**

1. **Sr. Virgilia Mascarinas** from Vietnam arrived in the Philippines on May 29, 2017 for her vacation and ongoing formation. She visited her family and followed her annual retreat in the Philippines. Together with these she processed her papers for Maastricht as delegate of the Unit in Vietnam for the General Chapter. We hope that the opportunities she received gave her spiritual nourishment to continue the mission in Vietnam.
2. **Sr. Yosefa Tri Retnaningsih** from Memphis Community of USA spent her vacation in her country in Indonesia. She left America on May 25, 2017. From Indonesia, she will go to Maastricht on July 11, 2017 to join the General Chapter. We hope that the ongoing formation programs she attended will renew her missionary spirit in her service to the people of USA.

## **News from the General Board**

1. **Srs. Rosaria and Lisbeth** paid a visit to the sisters in Norway, from May 27 until June 3, 2017. One of

the important reasons of the visit was to have a meeting with the Bishop of Oslo for the official closure of the mission there.

2. **Sr. Thruong** from Vietnam, who just finished her study in the Philippines, was sent back to Ho Chi Minh last June 12, 2017 for her new assignment. We thank the accompaniment of the Philippine Region in the duration of her initial formation from Postulancy, Novitiate up to this time of her Juniorate. Also for the sisters in the communities who journeyed with her during her time of studies and orientation in community and apostolic living.
3. **Sr. Yosita Sri Murtini**, who is studying in Rome, will go to the Mother House of Onder de Bogen, the Netherlands on July 7, 2017. While she has summer break of her studies, she gets the opportunity to participate as a member of the Supporting Committee for the coming General Chapter. Then she will have her annual retreat in Onder de Bogen. She will return to Rome on September 4, 2017.
4. **Srs. Man and Dung**, Vietnamese juniors who just finished their scholastic studies and juniors summer program/formation in the Philippines are now in Indonesia for their orientation to some communities and ministries. In this orientation, they will undergo as well formation programs which will be arranged

by the Provincial Board. They left the Philippines on June 6, 2017.

5. On June 26, 2017 the Philippine Region celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of the presence of the Congregation in the Philippines and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary as Region. The sisters will gather together in Davao Community for an ongoing formation and for the celebration. We wish you sisters a fruitful and meaningful celebration.

Kind regards,  
on behalf of the General Board,



Sr Rosaria Nur Hardiningsih  
General Superior



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