

Sisters of Notre Dame
Holy Spirit Delegation – Tanzania/Kenya
August Newsletter Volume 6 #2

New Life - New Growth - New Challenges – New Experiences

Hearty Welcome Sister Mary Jyosita

What a great day of rejoicing we experienced upon the arrival of a new member to our Holy Spirit Delegation. Our dear Sister Mary Jyosita arrived in Nairobi on July 29th and after a few days made her way to her new home at our Formation House in Njiro. All sisters and novices and postulants shared the joy and welcoming programme for Sister. We look forward to her ministry to and among us here in Tanzania.



***Look at coming
issues to see how
she has made her
home with us.***

Sisters Mary Mukti, Jyosita, Roshini and Annete raise hands in three cheers after the formees programme.



Return from Rome and Germany

Another reason to rejoice came with the arrival of our Sisters from their time in Rome and Germany. Sisters Mary Magdalene, Christine, Elizabeth, Pascalia and Teresa from our Holy Spirit Delegation, along with Sisters Mary Immaculate, Juliet and Therese Marie from Uganda, spent about eight days in Rome before beginning their Spirituality Workshop and Retreat in Germany. Read the following letter of some of their experiences.

Dear Sisters,

Greetings from all of us! This note is sent with gratitude and joy for the opportunity we received to go to Rome and Germany. The warm welcome we received from our Sisters in Casa Madre was just wonderful. We were privileged to visit many places within the short time we were in Rome and different Sisters took turns in accompanying us to various holy places. A short visit to our Italian Delegation and being with our Sisters was the best way of crowning our experience in Rome. It was a beautiful experience of our internationality as a congregation. We truly experienced the universality of the church by visiting different Churches and Basilicas that have stood for centuries. We were blessed to attend the Mass celebrated by Pope Francis on the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul.

Our journey to Germany was safe and Sisters Mary Julindis and Shauna received us at the airport. A wonderful drive to Gerleve Monastery was through the vast green land and forests. We were able not only to enjoy the scenery but our delicious packed lunch as well. The enriching Spirituality Workshop was facilitated by Sisters Mary Shauna and Julindis. Sister Maria Almuth also had an input for us on praying the labyrinth. In the course of the workshop we visited St. Lambert Church, the three centres: Coesfeld, Vechta and Mülhausen. Sister Maria Anneliese and all our Sisters from the three centers were happy to welcome us. They too appreciated the gifts that you sent with us. During the retreat we had another chance to visit St. Lambert Church. We prayed and reflected under the Coesfeld crucifix where our first Sisters knelt and prayed many decades ago and participated in the Coesfeld Way of the Cross.

When we visited the Heritage Centre we witnessed a walking history in the person of Sister Maria Hubertine who took us through the heritage room and explained the History of the Congregation in depth. This brought the history of our congregation alive in us. While in Germany we used to join the monks for daily Mass. It was so beautiful to join the Latin celebration and hear the Gregorian chant and their prayer bells. The Abbot gave us a quick visit to the monastery which is unheard of. He then showed us how the pipe organ works.



Dear sisters, words are not enough to thank you for taking care of our responsibilities while we were away. We are grateful for freeing us from our ministries to visit these holy places. We feel empowered, renewed and energized. Thank you for accompanying us with your prayers.



We too remembered and prayed for each one of you during our visits, renewal and retreat. Much love and many greetings from all our Sisters in Rome and Germany. Please receive a small token of our gratitude from all of us.

By: Sisters Mary Christine, Pascalia, Magdalene, Elizabeth, and Teresa, SND

Six weeks experience of our tertiate programme

Here is a wonderful letter from our Tertians in India regarding their experiences so far in their programme.

My dear Sister Mary Mukti and all the Sisters in our Holy Spirit Delegation, Praised be Jesus Christ. Sister Mary Sujita, our tertian director and all the tertians are doing well. Our tertianship began officially on 23rd June with a welcome address from Sister Mary Beena. She gave us some input to lead us into this time of our tertianship. She said that it is the intensive preparation of prayer, study and integration to prepare for Perpetual Vows, to seal our consecration to God, to the church and to the congregation and a time to discover our full identity as a follower of Jesus Christ. On 27th June Sister Mary Amala led us into the spiritual journey of the Intensive Journal. It was all about the inner journey and discovery and she led us to meditate using Twilight Imagery. The message we get from it can be drawn and we can allow it to speak to us; it was a wonderful experience for all of us.

After Sister Mary Amala's presentations we had a day of integration to look back and go over the whole experience. Sister Mary Vijaya gave a three-day presentation on the vows leading us to look at each one and memorize one or two articles from the Constitutions. We learned to "walk humbly" with the vow of Obedience, "to act justly" with the vow of Poverty and "to love tenderly" with the vow of Chastity; it was a very enriching experience. Mary Sujita introduced "Lectio Divina to all of us and all the stages that we have to follow and we practice this every Wednesday.

From 15th-26th July, eight of us went with Sister Mary Sujita to the Yoga Ashram in Munger while some of the other tertians had a Vipassana experience in Gaya. Both groups had a very wonderful and rich experience. We met Swami Niranjan a man full of wisdom and faith who usually doesn't meet people, but we had the privilege of meeting him. As you enter the place, we were told not to use phones, and cameras; it is strictly forbidden. There was an atmosphere of silence and you could feel the divine nature in every corner of the campus. We will share more when we come back.

Rev. Fr. Abe, SJ came for a three-day course on (NLP) Neuro-Linguistic Programme. It is based on healing of all our emotions and counselling. He gave us skills on how to go about the healing process and all of us enjoyed the process. This week we will have Sister Mary Rajani who will be taking Mariology for us.



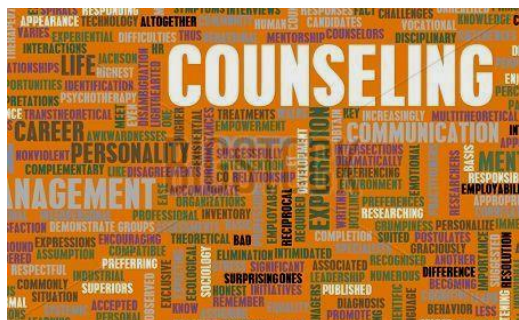
As you view the picture you can see our tertian director, Sister Mary Sujita and one of our presenters, Sister Mary Amala. We are a group of twelve tertians: Sisters M. Emma Cindy Gatakaa and Magdalene Musila Mbula from Holy Spirit Delegation Tanzania/Kenya; Sisters. M. Yolenta and Magdalena from the Indonesian Province; Sister M. Sangeeta Jacob from Visitation Province Bangalore and Sisters.M. Deepti Tudu, Sabeena Soren, Meena Arulappa, Leena Margaret Japasthanappa, Rose Pariyathu, Rekha Chelva Raj and Josephine Rayappa from the Assumption province Patna. Do keep us in your prayers.

As we bring our letter to a close, we want you to know we are praying for all of you in the Delegation. All of us send a lot of love especially Sister Mary Shobana. The metal ring on her leg is off now and a plaster cast is put on for one month, but it will take time to walk on her own. On another note, we were so happy to visit Munger, Jamalpur and the novitiate to see the buildings and schools which are built much like our own. Jamalpur was the first house we saw where all the pioneer Sisters arrived. The only challenge we have is the heat. It was supposed to rain in July but we had only three days of rain. Pray for us that we may get good weather.

Sister Mary Irene is doing well with her classes and travels with her six companions each day. Thank you very much for your prayers and this wonderful spiritual experience. Be blessed

Lovingly, Sisters Mary Emma and Maggie, SND

Ministry gifts and challenges



I had never known what counselling would cost me until I was assigned to one of the male prisons in Entebbe, Uganda for my counselling practice. One of the requirements to do any service to the prisoners was an official letter from the Uganda Prisoner Commissioner allowing me to do so. It was difficult to try to meet him but when I did, he asked me what message I was to give the prisoners. I told him that I would give them hope and help them see that life is worth it in spite of their challenges.

In the beginning, the prisoners hesitated, but after explaining to them what my companions and I were there for, they were ready to start the sessions. The number of clients was so big for group therapy and another challenge for me was that I could only attend to those who could speak English; I knew very well that I had limited skills. If I didn't have a skill that was needed, I could just be there with my listening presence. I had put all my trust in Jesus the true and mighty counsellor and He did the work on my behalf. After every counselling session, I could reflect on the words I used and none of them came from my own knowledge. I knew Jesus was fulfilling his promise: "You do not have to worry over what to say..." *by Sister Mary Margaret, SND*

My Ministry Experience

I thank God for my first Appointment to Notre Dame Kiomboi Community. Though we were four members when I arrived, within four days we were only two in our community as Sisters Mary Christine and Magdalene left for the Spirituality Workshop and Retreat in Germany. On 16th June, our students' took part in the African Child Day Programme some 46 km away in an interior village school. "The World Vision" provided two buses for our student and staff. It was a long bumpy ride through the forest and mud roads, finally arriving at Tulia. When we arrived a little late, all the students were sitting under the shady trees but they quickly arranged some benches and invited us to sit down. The programme began and when it was our turn, everyone was happy to witness our students' performance. By 1:00 P.M. we were feeling hungry but had to wait until 3:00 P.M. To our surprise, a delicious meal for about 2000 or more students was served. In a very orderly manner all got their meal and drink. What a great day! It was all brought to an end when the buses brought us back by 6:15 P.M.

In Kiomboi there is something new each day and we need to “expect the unexpected” and this makes each day something beautiful, blessed, and interesting. All of a sudden one may see a big truck coming in with huge ladders and a crowd gathers! TANESCO [Tanzania Electricity Service Company] arrived with the area manager, other officials and our generous parish priest accompanying them to give a service line to school. Though it was early morning at 9 A.M., they enjoyed a soda.

On Saturdays, I enjoy teaching religion to the children in the parish. After the school closed on June 28th, I was privileged to learn about “stock taking” in the school store with Sister Mary Kusum. Then Sister taught me how to use the computer and learned to use the internet. During the school break we visited a few families of our students and often joined Basic Christian Community for prayer. I found much joy when we visited families especially the poor ones. When we visited Robinson’s mother, who is paralyzed on the left side, we felt she needs our help. We asked her whether she would like to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist and she happily said YES. We arranged with Fr. Thomas Mangi and she received the Sacraments. After a week we went to pray Rosary with her and shared Bible passages. We pray that our presence here may bring fullness of life to many.

I can never forget my visit to the different offices in Kiomboi Municipality. Everything is a learning process for me. The most interesting thing is our “special choir” in our chapel. Come and experience it. All of you are welcome to Kiomboi. Karibuni Sana! *By Sister Mary Edna, SND*

Seek Knowledge and a Balanced Life

Notre Dame Sisters are knowledge seekers. They sleep and dream on how to add the knowledge the good God has given them. Challenges and difficulties become their stepping stones in meeting their goals. The time passes by and their vision becomes clearer.



What a joy to be in the classroom, listening attentively to the classes given by the lecturers, learning new things for the benefit of God’s people and continually seeking knowledge to build God’s kingdom here on earth.

I started my studies in May and am seeking knowledge in accountancy, finance and management. There are other subjects also that require my knowledge and skills in calculating such as the information we had on HIV/AIDS. Even with that information gained, I had to think and calculate how many people are dying each day from this disease.

The courses are challenging especially when I am required to balance a trial balance sheet and all the efforts seem to be in vain. These moments I feel that things have fallen apart and I stop and think what it feels like to live an “unbalanced life” as a religious. And so I go through the whole exercise again and again. The Spirit reminds me of God’s invitation to personally live a balanced life and integrate my prayer, community and ministry with this “balance sheet of life.” The final figures come together and I shout with joy and gratitude to God to see all balanced. When I live God’s will in my life despite the challenges, I feel I can begin each day again living a balanced life, seeking God’s kingdom, sharing his love and seeking his knowledge all the time. *By Sister Mary Phyllis, SND*

New and Enriching Experiences

What a privilege and a great joy to be in mission here at Mount Sinai Community, a community of caring and loving Sisters and a community of great help and support in my new ministry.

When I was appointed to Mount Sinai School, I was so excited to go and teach in my home country. I received a grand welcome from the Sisters, Priests, staff and students. But the drama was when I was asked to teach English in class four. Since I had never taught in an upper class before, I was truly nervous. For a few days I observed Sister Emma teach. No sooner had she left than I realized the task and responsibility ahead of me. But, I thank God for my Sisters, Sisters Mary Shobha and Elizabeth and the teaching staff for supporting me in planning and teaching my lessons.



Being in a community just out of the Novitiate has taught me to integrate prayer, community life and ministry. I am enjoying everything here especially moments of prayer with the students, preparing them for Mass and Sacraments. I am part of the school net ball team and I enjoy vigorous games every evening.

This second term has been so busy with many events and activities, these included Africa Child Day, Parents' Day, Class trips, Sports and Examinations. Thanks be to God for the wonderful community and ministry He has given to me. *By Sister Mary Berita, SND*



Notre Dame Osotwa

It's a new experience in the Maasai land, a new culture all together. This reminds us of God's creativity in his creation.

The Maasai people have various celebrations which are very significant to them: the circumcision which marks entry into adulthood, the "drinking of milk" which signifies that a Moran (young man) is entering old age! This means that he is allowed to drink milk in the presence of a woman! Interesting, isn't it? We were privileged to attend both celebrations and enjoyed the day. People from all walks of Maasai land were present. We ate and shared with them and of course carried one piece of meat home! The Morans had their usual dancing of jumping up and down, higher than you can ever imagine.

On 8th July, we opened another chapter of our life here with the beginning of the second semester with 89 enthusiastic children. After a few weeks a few more enrolled and all are eager to learn; their bright faces predict a bright future. We can see the tireless efforts in reading and writing put in by Sisters Mary Magdalene and Susan who were here before us. We are the two new ones and we are trying our best to prepare them for elocution contest to help them gain courage and confidence.

Two of the major challenges here are the language barrier since the commonly spoken language is Kimaasai and the lack of seriousness from some parents. They consider herding the cattle more important than sending their children to school. We all believe that there is some special seed of goodness hidden in each of these children and our mission is to help them bring these to fruition because these too are God's beautiful creation. *By Sisters Mary Jacinta and Esther, SND*

The Notre Dame Osotwa Community and school bid farewell to Sister Mary Magdalene Mbula and her ministry here in the short period she was in Simanjiro. It was not easy to say good-bye to Sister Mary Susan who was one of the pioneers in the Simanjiro Mission. Her farewell gift to the students were a very meaningful song and skit based on Children's Rights which was presented on Africa Child Day bringing tears to the audience especially the parents who could understand the language. We will remember you with love, dear Sister Mary Susan. May our good God bless your journey ahead!

Our tears were turned to joy when Sisters Mary Jacinta and Esther joined the Osotwa Community. Their cheerful faces bring back many smiling faces from the Maasai Community.
By Sister Mary Rashmi, SND

A Wonderful Blessing

Our Pastor from Holy Family Parish, Rev. Fr. Eustaki Tarimo, blessed every part of our house and compound. As part of visiting every Jumuiya (Small Christian Community), Father came with the Jubilee Cross, and began in Chapel with a special prayer and proceeded to every room of our convent, to the garden, and even behind the house where we house our chickens, rabbits and pigs. He took such



joy in being, as he said, “in our little village”. Father then went to the school compound and blessed each part of the boarding facility and school.



What a joy and blessing for all of us. The Feast of the Holy Family will be our special 25th Jubilee celebration of our parish. Come join us for this great day of jubilee joy!

We will miss Fr. Tarimo as he leaves our parish and begins a new Diocesan ministry. Feel at home with us and know you are always welcome here, Father.

Our Education Meeting

August 8th was the special gathering of those Sisters who are involved in various aspects of ministry, particularly in education. Many Sisters came together to hear from our Education Coordinator, Sister Mary Neelima, and to share their wisdom, experiences, and challenges. Sister Mary Mukti gave a warm welcome to each participant and words of encouragement for their ministry.



Some of the topics were “Building Relationships with Students” and “Forming Students to make a Difference.” Before ending the day, there was another important topic presentation on “Collaboration.”

All the sisters expressed their gratitude for the full day and look forward to the next meeting which will probably be over a two-day period. Such an enriching experience only highlights again and again our rich educational heritage as Sisters of Notre Dame.

By Sister Mary Annete, SND





A final note:

We were glad to share with you the many experiences our younger Sisters are having, in regard to ministry and opportunities to enhance their appreciation of our internationality. New ministries are always challenging but provide a wonderful avenue for growth. Our internationality equips each one of us with a wider vision and a greater appreciation for who we are as Sisters of Notre Dame.

In our next issue, we will have much to share on our 5th African Conference held this year in Tanzania. Our theme will be “SND Vision for Africa” so you can look forward to a very exciting issue.

From the Newsletter Committee: Sisters Mary Annete, Shaija and Shobha, SND