

15th Anniversary of Profession: A Renewal Gathering



With news that the monsoon was drawing to a close and a heatwave was on its way, the four of us—Sister Marie Faustine, Sister Marie Joanne, Sister Anna Maria, and Sister Marie Petria headed to Goheung Woori Jip (meaning "Our Home"), a welcoming space at the southernmost tip of our provincial ministry where migrants can gather, feel at home, and experience a true sense of belonging. We first stopped at Caritas Suncheon to greet Fr. Peter Kim of the Archdiocese of Gwangju, who serves in the migrant ministry, and joined the weekly Saturday meeting with our sisters. Afterward, we moved to Goheung Woori Jip to attend the Philippine Mass, where we enjoyed warm fellowship during a birthday celebration for two women.

We also visited Sorokdo, where we celebrated Sunday Mass at the Staff Quarters Church and enjoyed a quiet day of rest before beginning a week of ministry on the island. Sorokdo is an island with a painful history where people with Hansen's disease (leprosy) were once forcibly isolated. Today Hansen's disease is virtually eradicated in South Korea with almost no new cases. About 400 elderly residents who have recovered from the disease still reside on the island and receive full support from the government.

During the week, we spent time sorting clothing and blankets donated to the community, praying that these donations will provide warmth and comfort to those adapting to an unfamiliar environment and climate. We also visited a nearby seaweed factory where many migrant workers are employed, as well as the home of a Vietnamese family, giving us the opportunity to witness firsthand the authenticity of their daily lives. On our final day, we offered Mass at the Sorokdo Patients' Church which is distinct from the staff church and was built by and for the residents. We were then guided on a tour through the island. While touring the history hall within the church, we were deeply moved by the sorrow, resilience, and steadfast faith of the people with Hansen's disease whose faith was their guiding light amid years of trials, and pain.

We are deeply grateful for this precious time away from our daily routine, which allowed us to experience a new ministry and look back deeply on our life of vows. Moving forward, we hope to continue responding with joy and faithfulness to our call as Sisters of Nore Dame.