“God’s mercy can make even the driest Land become a garden, can restore life to dry bones (Cf.Ez 37:1-14). ... Let us be renewed by God’s mercy. Let us be loved by Jesus, let us enable the power of his love to transform our lives too; and let us become agents of this mercy, channels through which God can water the earth, protect all creation and make justice and peace flourish.”

— Pope Francis, Easter Urbi et Orbi message on March 31, 2013

PEACE AND MERCY

Mercy and peace – What images conjure up in your mind as you read these words?

We all experience each. How are these expressed in my life? Does practicing mercy effect peace within me?

Being merciful becomes doable when I realize all the mercy I’ve received -- from God, from others.

When I trust, it is possible for unsettling feelings of agitation to evolve into the welcomed soul experience of peace.

Is mercy; is peace hard to come by? Consider a smile, a kind gesture, an encouraging word.

St. Teresa of Calcutta—who we still struggle to call “saint”—not because she isn’t one, but because “Mother” so suits her—was and is mercy, expressed in immediate acceptance, unconditional love, willing sacrifice.

Blessed Sacrament in her daily Holy Hours, He brought her supernatural strength of soul, mind, and body to minister as she did.

Now she intercedes on our behalf. St. Teresa of Calcutta, pray for us, for mercy, for peace.

Written by: Sr. Theresa Jones, FMA
Egypt in general calls to mind the pyramids, pharaohs, the sphinx, Cleopatra... For us here in Cairo, in Heliopolis (Sun City) at St. Clare’s College what comes to mind are girls, girls and more girls and young women—over 800 of them! The sun is indeed ever-shining here and mostly in the three digits. As a Salesian Sisters’ community of five, we have a greater and more constant Son that brightens our days, illuminates our lives, and gives energy and enthusiasm to all we do—and His name is Jesus.

During Holy Week we took a historic trip to Upper Egypt to pray with several Catholic parishes there. Lately, even though school officially closed for the year in May, we have had many activities including a lively summer camp and a very successful eight-week public-speaking session for 25 of our senior class girls sponsored by Toastmasters International. We have also enjoyed taking our camp counselors and volunteers to see some sights in Alexandria as well as the Giza Pyramids and the Sphinx. All these many activities had but one aim—to make our girls and young women happy in discovering their God-given talents and potential. We feel privileged to be part of God’s plan for our Egyptian young girls and young women. We also feel that by your sincere concern, care, prayers and offerings you are partnering with us here in Heliopolis, the city of the Sun!

Written by: Sr. Rachel Crotti, FMA

Saint Clare’s College Heliopolis, Egypt

Three happy American Sisters in Egypt! Sr. Rachel Crotti,(Heliopolis) Sr. Colleen Clair (Alexandria) and Sr. Charlotte Greer, (Heliopolis)


Visit to the Giza Pyramids and the Sphinx ↑ In Upper Egypt with the Alexandria Sisters ↓ Enjoying Easter with Sr. Sumiko from the General Council in Rome → Sr. Marguerite Helmi of our Heliopolis community ←
Dear Readers,

I recently attended the United States Catholic Mission Association (USCMA) 2016 Conference which was held in Cincinnati, Ohio. The first keynote address, “Lament in Mission” was presented by Dr. Clarence Newsome, Ph.D. who is the President of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati. He gave a summary of the history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the divisions which existed among the States.

Another speaker, Lara Green, presented A Look into Modern Day Slavery. It is sad to know that even today there are many who are enslaved in different ways. Human trafficking is slavery at its core. Other forms include domestic servitude, forced labor, child labor, sex trafficking, bonded labor, forced marriage.

Below is the website where you can learn about slavery today, connect with an organization and browse ways to get involved in the fight against human trafficking and modern-day slavery.

www.endslaverynow.org

The Freedom Center works through education and inspiration to encourage everyone to take part in the ongoing struggles for freedom.

www.freedomcenter.org

Slavery persists, but so do abolitionists. I was pleased to learn about the International Justice Mission (IJM). This organization works to enforce existing national prohibitions against slavery and human trafficking through increased reliance on transnational investigational work, data collection and sharing. Lara Green, the speaker, told the story of Kumar, a teen who was among those enslaved in bonded labor in a brick factory in India. He bravely testified against the perpetrators and is now free, and is being mentored by the IJM staff. He wants to become a social worker in order to free more slaves of human trafficking.

The conference brought out the necessity of being TOGETHER in MISSION.

- Who is out there? What are they doing? How can we help? Network to find solutions.

- Mission and service EVERYDAY. This is what God calls us to do.

Being there for people around us – “with and for others”...blessing, enlivening, bringing life, raising, healing and freeing.

Serving together in Jesus Name,

Written by: Sr. Elizabeth Villanueva, FMA
Thank you for joining our Sisters as they celebrated some tremendous milestones in their lives as women religious.

Jubilee - July 2016
The parents of Sr. Cesira Pierotti emigrated to the United States from Italy when she was one year old. She had an older sister, and soon, a younger brother. In search of work, the family initially moved to Chicago, IL. When Cesira was 8 years of age her family returned to Italy to visit grandparents and other family members. While in Italy she went to school, and received her First Communion and Confirmation there. When she was 10 the family moved back to Chicago and remained there until she finished public school, at the age of sixteen.

After her sister Alfea married, the family moved back to Buffalo, N.Y. Work was very scarce, and became even worse 2 years later when the stock market crashed. Although finding work proved to be very difficult, after praying to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Cesira found work as a secretary, having excellent speaking and writing skills. At this time in her life, Cesira felt very close to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and felt her holy Mother Mary very near.

One evening, Cesira, who was making a novena at the Church of the Jesuits, felt a strong desire to become a Sister. One day after work, when stopping by a Church to make a visit, she asked if a priest could hear her confession, as she wanted to share her soul's wish to become a Sister. That parish was administered by Redemptorist priests, and the priest that was called was a recent arrival from Florida. Not by chance, but as Providence would have it, while in Florida he came to know the Salesian Sisters who worked with the children of the parish there. He was very impressed with the Sisters' simplicity, cheerfulness, poverty, and love shown towards the children, and shared that information with Cesira. Cesira immediately responded, “That is where I wish to go.”

Sr. Cesira spent 75 years of her life as a Salesian Sister in the ministry of Catholic education, originally serving for many years in New York and New Jersey, and since 1960 in California. Within her religious community, the Salesian Sisters, she served in leadership roles at the local and provincial levels, and for many years helped cultivate and nurture religious vocations. Well into her eighties, when she could no longer serve in active ministry, she maintained contact with her many acquaintances and former students by phone, mail, and then email when it came into use. Although she was handicapped in being able to walk, and already slowly going blind with macular degeneration, she enthusiastically took part in community prayer and gatherings. Her great devotion to Our Lady, her deep faith and joyful demeanor were the hallmark signs of her Salesian vocation. She passed away at the age of 97, as simply and beautifully as she had lived, into her Beloved’s arms, her Love, Jesus.

Written by: Sr. Mary Mullaly, FMA
Jane, daughter of Guadalupe Sanchez and Rutilia Del Moral, was the third child of a family of 11 children. When she was 3, the family moved to San Antonio, TX.

In the summer of 1941, Jane was invited to work with other young missionary catechists with the Sisters of Divine Providence, where she was happy doing this type of work for a total of 4 years, however it wasn’t where she would spend her life. On the morning of April 24, 1945, her Pastor and father drove her to the Salesian Sisters’ convent where she entered as an aspirant.

In 1945, Jane was sent with 5 other aspirants to North Haledon, N.J. In 1948, after profession, Sr. Jane was assigned to Raymondville, TX., where she taught Kindergarten. On October 19, 1953, she was sent to New Jersey to work among the Puerto Rican immigrants in the city of Passaic, for 22 years. She was dedicated to the mission of outreach to the poverty stricken children.

In 2004, Sr. Jane came to St. John Bosco School community in San Antonio, TX., where she tutored students. Her love for the little ones found her teaching catechism every week at St. Jude Parish. She remained in this community until her last illness in June, 2016, when it became necessary to transfer her to our Provincial House. Sr. Jane was a woman of prayer and of service, with a good sense of humor that uplifted everyone’s spirits.

A little known fact is that Sr. Jane was the first and only FMA given permission in the 1950’s to drive a vehicle at a time when religious women were not seen behind the wheel.

In 1975 Provincial, Mother Ida Grasso, sent Sr. Jane to San Marcos, TX. In 1981, after 25 years of our presence in that mission the house was closed. Since then she worked as a school teacher, catechist, and treasurer in the Texas cities of Raymondville, San Marcos, San Antonio, Austin, and in Westwego, Louisiana.
Sr. Elvira Mansoor, FMA, was born in Choubrah, Cairo, and died peacefully at 92 years of age, at the FMA Provincial House in San Antonio, TX.

In her 58 years of religious life, Sr. Elvira served as an exemplary Elementary school teacher in Cairo, Alexandria and Heliopolis, Egypt where she taught Arab, French, and English. For several years she served in the capacity of Administrator and secretary at the Ospedale Italiano in Damascus, Syria, which has been in the care of the Salesian Sisters since 1913.

When she transferred to the U.S. province she was assigned as an Elementary school teacher and catechist in Bellflower, CA, and San Marcos, TX. She also taught at Corpus Christi School in San Francisco and helped with arts and crafts as well as supervision on the playground at the Salesian Sisters School in Corralitos, CA. Her students loved her visible union with God, enjoyable storytelling, and the fact that she was always looking out for their good.

In June 2008, she was transferred to the FMA Provincial House in San Antonio, TX, because of health issues. Sr. Elvira was not only a great artist who enjoyed painting and sewing but was excellent at all types of embroidery. Her hands were never idle and she continued to create beautiful items until she became very ill. She always looked for ways to share her creations and bring joy to others, especially the children and young people. Sr. Elvira had a great sense of humor and loved making others happy with her jokes and stories. She loved praying the Rosary to Mary, Help of Christians for her family and all the intentions that had been recommended to her prayers. She would spend hours before the Blessed Sacrament where she obtained the strength and courage to accept her illness and the aging process. She will be missed dearly.

Visit our new website on Christmas Day!
www.salesiansisterswest.org

The Big Give S.A., is a 24-hour day of on-line giving for South Central Texas. The purpose of this annual, community-wide giving challenge is to increase public awareness of the impact local nonprofits make in addressing our community’s social challenges. It brings local nonprofits and donors together to expand online giving, connecting people to the causes that move them the most. By turning giving into a shared city-wide experience, we can significantly impact the future of San Antonio and collectively move our communities forward. The Big Give S.A. is based on other highly successful giving days hosted across the country.

The Big Give S.A. is part of the national day of giving called Give Local America, where more than 100 communities across the country come together on this one day.

Remember to donate on May 4th at

Tea Anyone?
4th Annual Month of Mary Ladies’ Tea Party
May 6, 2017
(210) 431-4999 x249
sswdevelopment@sbcglobal.net

Ladies don’t forget to save this special date on your calendars for next year! This very popular event is a sell out and you do not want to be left without a seat. We are seeking volunteers and new committee members to help plan next year’s event. Donations are also being accepted now to help get us started early for next year. Please contact Esmeralda Castillo, Director of Development and Event Coordinator.
My first year of the Novitiate was grace-filled, enriching, and provided me with many opportunities to grow.

The first months of the Novitiate were an adaptation process as I learned to assimilate the culture of the East Coast and its lifestyle. Perhaps more importantly, I became acquainted with the Salesian Family of the East Coast, building relationships with my new community and the dozens of FMA from the East.

The most enriching parts of the Novitiate for me have been growing in my prayer life, community life, and in the charism. One of the most beautiful aspects of the Novitiate is the silence and the many opportunities for personal prayer. We have a beautiful chapel, so trips to the chapel “to get away with Jesus” are frequent and easily accessible. I have thoroughly enjoyed these moments of deep stillness and intimacy with the Lord; they have indeed deepened my relationship with my future Spouse and have helped affirm my Salesian vocation.

I have also really enjoyed growing in community. As a novice, we get to recreate with the Sisters; thereby helping build community.

Lastly, studying the Constitutions of our congregation this year and evangelizing young people through the Sacramental Retreats and Camp Auxilium has helped me fall deeper in love with the Salesian charism.

I feel affirmed in my calling to become a Salesian Sister and look forward to growing more this year as I prepare to make my First Profession in 2017.

August 4, 2015, Novices receive the Congregation’s medal from Sr. Patricia King, Provincial for Mary Immaculate Province

Sr. Melissa Benitez, FMA
My name is Sr. Quynh. I have been with the Salesian Sisters since 2013. This year, I’m starting my second year as a novice in Newton, NJ. My first year as a novice was a grace filled year. The first thought of leaving my Province with the Sisters I have known for two years scared me a little bit. However, all the Sisters in the Eastern Province have been very welcoming and helped me realize that I belong to a much bigger family. This realization helped me to love my vocation as a Salesian Sister even more.

The gradual integration into community life has been my favorite part of this beautiful journey. Through community living, I’ve come to learn more about myself and interpersonal relationships. I’ve learned more about my gifts, but also my weaknesses; to accept other people for who they are; and have had many opportunities to practice virtues. Most importantly, I appreciate the time deepening my relationship with Jesus. It is a true gift to experience the love Jesus has for me and each of us.

I continue to ask for your prayers as I begin preparing for my First Profession this coming year. May Jesus, Mary and Joseph bless you abundantly for your kindness.

Sr. Quhyn Pham, FMA

I first began discerning a religious vocation when I was in my 20’s. I began to feel God’s calling. Instead of giving Him my yes in fear of what a total commitment to Him might mean, I gave him a year of my life as a volunteer with a Salesian priest. I feared being in close contact with the Salesian Sisters for fear that I might become one of them, coward that I was!

My plan was to go to Bolivia to serve in the missions, but God in His wisdom reminded me of the humor in making my own plans and sent me instead to Bellflower, California to work in a Salesian school and live in the house of formation. Within 5 months of his patient knocking, the love of the Sisters and the joy of the mission began to wear down my fears and selfishness!

I knew what God was asking of me, it was just a matter of me having the courage to say yes and take that leap of faith. I prayed a thousand times asking God to change my heart and make me want what He was asking, that was when I saw him work a miracle in my life!

God doesn’t call the qualified, He qualifies the called and my job is to serve Him in joy and strive to bring Him glory in the great and very routine moments of my day to day life.

I became a novice on August 3, 2016, and will continue on my path of giving my heart completely to Christ in the spirit of the Salesian Congregation, and await in anticipation the joys and challenges that lie ahead. I know that God will continue to bless my “yes” to Him with a love too great for fear to survive!

Sr. Monica Wheeler, FMA
Our 13th Annual Children’s Education Golf Tournament was a beautiful success. Everyone had a great time, but most importantly, we raised over $11,000 for our Friends of Don Bosco Education Fund. Students chosen to receive these partial scholarships are carefully selected according to their display of true Salesian Spirit both in academics and citizenship.

We wish to thank all our sponsors and donors for making a difference in children’s lives. Partial scholarships will be awarded for the remainder of the 2016–2017 school year.

Thank you to our Sponsors!
Title Sponsor—Larry Kennedy
Hospitality Sponsor—Mark & Rosanna Ruiz (Ruiz McDonald’s)
Small Business Package Sponsor—Silver Eagle Distributors
Hole Sponsors
Ancira—Mrs. April Ancira
Trane—Mr. Jeff Turov
Carrera Optical—Mr. R. Gary Carrera
Texas State Representative Justin Rodriguez
Helicopter Golf Ball Drop Sponsor
San Antonio Police Officer’s Association, Inc.—Officer Robert Grajeda

Congratulations to the winners of the day!
1st Place—Mr. Larry Kennedy & Team (Score of 60)
2nd Place—Mr. Oscar Gomez/Brigadier General Bob Hullender (Retired) (Score 61)
3rd Place—Angelus Funeral Home (Score of 63)
Closest to the Pin (1)—Mr. Lane Mitchell
Closest to the Pin (2)—Mr. Louie Barrios

Thank you for supporting children’s education!
October 17, 2016
The campers in Corralitos enjoyed days filled with jewelry making, photography, archery, swimming, and much more! In the evenings we ran around on scavenger hunts, chilled out with a movie night, and enjoyed s'mores at the campfire. We can't wait until next summer to do it all again!

During this summer Sr. Mary Link, Sr. Phuong Nguyen, and Sr. Lindsay Durham worked hard to bring the Good News of Jesus' Mercy and Love. We spent 5 weeks travelling to five different parishes in the Colorado Springs area serving anywhere from 25-60 youngsters. The children were enthusiastic and so happy to have us come to serve them.

Sr. Theresa Jones– Camp Auxilium Girls’ Resident and Day Camp in Corralitos, CA

Sr. Sydney Moss having some fun with day campers at Camp Auxilium.

Sr. Phuong Nguyen– Fun with Lego’s at Camp Avalanche in Colorado Springs, CO

 Sr. Lindsay Durham– Camp Avalanche

Sr. Theresa Jones– Camp Auxilium Girls’ Resident and Day Camp in Corralitos, CA

Sr. Phuong Nguyen– Fun with Lego’s at Camp Avalanche in Colorado Springs, CO

Sr. Lindsay Durham– Camp Avalanche
This year’s Annual Turkey Meal Drive helped feed over 100 needy families in our community thanks to these and other generous donors. Veronica Guerrero, Associate Director of Development, lead the effort.

Special thanks to:
- Marco Gonzalez-Plains Capital Bank
- H-E-B #262
- Port San Antonio
- Juan Antonio Flores
- Yvonne Soliz-Valdez
- St. George Maronite Catholic Church
- Wal-Mart #3058

Texas State Representatives Justin Rodriguez (Dist. 125) & Ina Minjarez (Dist. 124)

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