



# GLANCE

Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity  
Generalate – Rome, Italy

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*Walking in the footsteps of Jesus, Francis recognized the dignity of every person.  
This reverence in service ought to be an intrinsic quality of our lives. GC#4*

How do the ministries of your province/community/mission  
reflect a respect for the dignity of all whom you serve?

## SAINT CLARE MISSION Tanzania

### SIGNS OF COMPASSION



Do you remember "Visiting Sunday"? Yesterday, June 25, was on such day here in our village. The Moslem celebration of Eid had begun and groups of family and friends and children in their finest clothes were on the road visiting their other families and friends and going to the mosque. It was a friendly atmosphere and you could hear music and songs in the air. Meanwhile, some of our Sisters from Mahina took another walk -- so close, across the street -- to visit a family which had a tragedy that made the nightly national news a few weeks ago. The parents had been having family problems and Mama shot her husband and finally took her own life....and worse ... in front of their 6 children ranging from 2 years old to 15!! Needless to say, a sad event. The sisters had gone over at the time of the burials and prayed with the family. The Father was a Catholic in our small outstation group and the Mama belonged to another Protestant group. The grandparents who have moved in to care for the children expressed gratitude for the sisters' visit. The two year old loved playing with them and was sad when they left.

This situation family life and its challenges was also on the minds of the planners of the program of the annual Sisters and Bishops Conference held last week in Dar Es Salaam. S. Margie Wolf attended those meetings and participated in a workshop presented by African religious who work in Washington, DC, United States at the African Faith and Justice Network Office (AFJN). In those sessions the Tanzanian Sisters have undertaken projects connected with "Child Protection" and "land grabbing" efforts of multinationals here in Tanzania. Those companies sell GMO seeds (genetically altered seeds), often with consequences of causing sterility in the women in certain villages. An effort to combat poverty and hunger has turned into more problems for all.

So we, as all over the world, need a lot of compassion to address the life of our societies. Yet when the People of God are working together great and loving things can happen. We thank you all for your prayers for Tanzania.

S. Marguerite Wolf

## MOST HOLY TRINITY PROVINCE Semarang, Indonesia

*'Living with one heart in our diversity, we become a joyful sign of peace.'*

We, the Sisters of Most Holy Trinity Province, Semarang, are trying to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, and to imitate St. Francis, who tries to recognize the dignity of human beings and all creatures through our daily activities and prayers. We also live by the spirit of Mother Magdalen Damen, especially her mystic experience of God, the Almighty. More than that, we always try to adapt to our holy ground, the place where we are living and serving.

Our service of humanity for the sake of God's glory can be reflected in at least three fields of our ministry activities:

1. In religious development, we encourage our female students who are staying in Katharina Damen Dormitory to attend the adoration of the holy sacrament which is conducted twice a month -- namely, on the first Friday for sisters and the first Sunday with students. Together, we pray for peace in the world and the solidarity of all people. In this way, we also teach the youngsters to realize that we cannot live exclusively, since we are part of the whole of humanity. It is impossible for us to stay away and to be deaf to our fellow human being's cry and misery caused by the unrest in the world. Prayer strengthens us to become the true children of God.
2. In social development, together with Management students of ASMI Santa Maria, a college that is administered by our sisters, we visited an elderly house in a suburb of Yogyakarta town. It was an occasion to teach student how to understand others, especially elderly and poor people. Students were invited to experience directly the fact of life that every person will arrive at this stage of life: being old and being in need of helping hands. Youngsters usually are more occupied in preparing their own future, but through this visit we helped them to understand that life is also a matter sharing as Jesus has told us.
3. In the spirit of pluralism, we definitely realize that Indonesia is predominantly inhabited by Moslems. As a minority, we have to be proactive in dialog and show good will and respect to them because we also have Moslem students in our campus. During the month of Ramadhan, the fasting period, we usually participate in the conclusion ritual which usually takes place in the afternoon, together with Catholic and Protestant students and lecturers. Through this participation we want to show that our faith in humanity is strong and the presence of God unites us, regardless our religion.



Sr. M. Vincentine Susiati, OSF

## IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY PROVINCE

Santa Maria, Brazil

Be a sign of hope and prophecy in face of human vulnerabilities in Brazil

As a Province going to the peripheries called to be “a sign of hope to a struggling world, “like Mother Magdalen, we seek to be attentive to the manifestations of the Spirit in the different life realities of our time, especially in areas of greater social vulnerability. It is assumed that every human person, regardless of race, color, gender, belief and formation, has the right of respect and recognition of his or her dignity as an expression and reflection of God’s love.

Poverty, together with low socio-cultural level, contributes to the increasing social vulnerability. It deprives people of the minimum conditions of survival and causes situations of unworthiness, leading children, youth and adults into drugs, violence, abuse and sexual exploitation. Situations of human indignity can be realized in different forms and manifested in the different realities of life and mission in our province, in education, health care, social and pastoral services. We believe that through education, it is possible to contribute in formation of a culture of respect for human dignity, more specifically, by promoting and living the values of freedom, justice, equality, solidarity, cooperation, tolerance and peace. We have various social projects in the province, with the intention to influence, share and unify attitudes, habits and behaviors among those who receive the prophetic action of our Sisters.



In smaller groups under the supervision of a teacher, students are encouraged to participate in a theoretic-practical experience called “Adopting a Family” in a situation of social vulnerability, by living in a poor environment in a neighborhood of Santa Maria. The families are chosen by the local Team of Family Health Strategy and focus on severe priorities, such as drug addiction, alcoholism, family violence, child prostitution, chronic diseases, teenage pregnancy and so on. Students are encouraged to make periodic visits to families and follow methodological steps, including the history and situational diagnosis of the family, the survey of health needs, the planning and implementation of the care plan.



The contact with the reality of daily life of the families is for both teachers and students a life-forming school in which they are challenged to review traditional concepts, to expand the interactive possibilities with different existential realities and to promote the exercise of human solidarity. Reviewing values, respecting different cultures and kinds of knowledge, and learning from social inequities, provoke new ways of thinking and acting for all involved. In the context of the families, advances can be seen, such as helping to cope with family mourning, trying to get employment and home ownership, celebrating the baptism of twin children sponsored by a group of students, organizing celebrations on festive dates, building up deeper family ties. We came to the conclusion that it is necessary to discover together with the families the necessary means for the improvement of life quality and status of citizenship.

S. Dirce Stein Backes

## CHRIST THE KING PROVINCE Lüdinghausen, Germany

*In hospice we are serving people on the last stage of their life*

Death and dying has been pushed to the edge in our society. To be young, dynamic, active and capable is popular belief. But when all of a sudden, there is the message: “Cancer!” – “AIDS!” – “Incurable, no more therapy possible!” then the world is tumbling down. When helplessness, frailty and pains intensify some would long for a final solution, they would like to take a releasing medication (euthanasia). The mission statement of the hospice movement says: “Life to the last!” The hospice movement regards life as a natural unity from birth until death. Dying is the last phase of life. This positive idea of all religious denominations excludes euthanasia.

In Mönchengladbach, there is the Christopher Hospice since 1991. Its task is to accompany incurable people with cancer or AIDS during the last phase of their lives, as well as accompany their relatives and friends. For many years I try to meet the patients there at eye level giving them human dignity to the last. When a life comes to the end, when personal aims and plans, material values and former successes lose their importance, then it shows what is really essential. In accompanying seriously ill people and their relatives you experience how precious and nurturing it is just to be there and to share the present moment – in whatever way this moment may develop.

Once when I returned from the pharmacy two young girls were standing in front of the sign of the hospice. They didn't understand what it meant and talked about a “house to die.” I explained instead it were a “house to live.” Here people live until their last minute. Patients need support, care, security and confidence. Here there are tears and laughter; people listen to and speak with one another. The patient chooses the topic of conversation. Also, silence is experienced and endured. We pray with the people and, if wanted we will prepare worship services; Holy Communion is offered and a priest may be called for the sacrament of the sick. Also, other faiths and life ideas are respected. The stay in the hospice may last from one to three days, two or three weeks or several months.

We try to fulfill the wishes of the patients: e. g. to take a stroll in the wheelchair around the city, to visit a café, to go shopping. One patient was sleepy, but wished to have half a chicken for supper. It was bought and we wondered how that would go. We put the chicken into her hands and her eyes radiated. She held and fell asleep. Her face showed a very content expression also beyond her death. Another patient didn't want to stay in bed. She wanted to tie a wreath for Christmas. She showed me how to make a teddy bear and much more. It was a wonderful time. All of a sudden she had convulsions and didn't recover any more. Two days she lay in bed and then she calmly fell asleep forever.

Two former patients of “our” St. Francis Hospital were passionate motorcyclists. “If one time we could have the fresh wind around the nose.” Somebody heard this murmur and already contacts were searched. Two days later a group of motorcyclists with sidecars were there and took the two patients for a ride. They rode across the landscape and as usual visited a pub. They returned home highly satisfied.

I came to know some patients from my work at St. Francis Hospital. Those were surprised and glad to see me in the hospice, too. During my 14 years in the hospice, I was able to accompany some people on their last steps. For me it was important that the dying men/women were accompanied with empathy and that they might stay in dignity and trust. I feel related to the relatives beyond the day of death. Sometimes we meet for a talk and together go to the cemetery. There the relatives can communicate again what is important for them.

M. Magdalen is a great example for me while I'm serving in the hospice, as well as in the hospital: she went to see the sick, handicapped and dying people and stayed as long as help was needed. Thus she gave them closeness and human dignity.

Sr. Maria Klinkenberg

## SAINT FRANCIS PROVINCE Redwood City, California

### Dignity and Quality of Life for Eldercare Residents

“Sisters in communities that provide support for their community members can advocate for quality healthcare that all older people deserve by first providing it among themselves and then advocating for all seniors in our society.”



As our population in the United States grows older and the economy continues to influence the cost of living, more residents will be looking for alternative living situations to accommodate their physical, emotional and social well-being needs and desires. As a nation and a community, this is what we should strive towards. For our religious communities in particular, it is fundamentally important to address certain issues. Among these issues are assuring spiritual and community service needs are met, oversight for healthcare needs, and advocacy for members by others within the community.



Until recent years, receiving quality eldercare has only been available for those who were able to afford private duty nursing or residence in assisted or independent living facilities. The history of eldercare has shown that often the aged and/or infirm had not planned for their long term care needs, finding themselves warehoused in facilities that did not address the right to a dignified care approach for their residents and patients. Advocacy is needed at all levels. It should be the responsibility of community leaders (religious order communities) to provide

oversight for all members of the community for healthcare, housing and communications so that Sisters do not feel isolated, and can be assured that someone is available to assist with these concerns. A long term plan for retirement funding, housing and healthcare should be set in place before the need arises for every community member.

It is important to remember that elderly residents in any type of home have rights. The resident's wishes prevail regardless of what others think is best, including family, staff and medical personnel. The right to say “yes” or “no” is part of the respect and dignity that should be afforded to all residents in full recognition of his or her individuality. Providing a home-like environment is necessary to promote the health and wellbeing of the resident as well. Remaining flexible about waking and sleeping, dining, dressing, and bathing is imperative to maintaining a comfortable, home-like environment. Staff in home-care facilities are encouraged to focus on the residents as individuals when providing care and service. Treating the resident as a whole person with feelings and ideas, encouragement and promotion of their ideas, engagement in conversation throughout the day and at meal times should be required. Helping residents achieve a sense of purpose, making transportation available, planning activities that feed the mind and the soul and a sense of fun, encouraging attendance at prayer/worship services is also part of achieving a sense of having a whole life filled with purpose.

“Aging in place” is the new acronym for caring for our elderly in a home situation. This is not a new idea, but healthcare organizations and senior advocates are embracing this way of looking at the aging process and the challenges brought forward due to our population demographics which show people are living longer. Aging gracefully and in whole spirit is not something that is given as a gift, it is a right and a choice that all seniors should have. Sisters in communities that provide this support can advocate for quality healthcare that all older people deserve by first providing it among themselves and then advocating for all seniors in our society.

Nancy Paine, Manager of Marian Residence, Santa Maria, CA

## MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS PROVINCE Orlik, Poland

*“Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”  
(St. Francis of Assisi)*

St. Francis, teaches us how to live and act in accordance with the Gospel. He is the perfect example for our times, when there are so many lost, wounded, seeking the meaning of their life.

For many Sisters who minister as catechists, nurses, teachers for handicapped, who minister among the sick and in the projects of the Caritas, the life of St. Francis becomes a source of inspiration to overcome their fear, to meet the needs of God’s people. Generosity is possible, if we overcome internal obstacles, prejudices, and stereotypes. When in January of 2015, I started my ministry for the Caritas of the Diocese of Warsaw-Prague my idea of this organization was completely different and



very superficial; I knew about it only through the media. But each day I have learned something new and witnessed many wonderful and touching stories regarding the life of the marginalized, rejected, and lonely. I was looking for an answer to my question: “What is Caritas?” Caritas as Love, shows me the truth about man/woman and his/her dignity, that he/she is loved by God very much. These people are for us a “silent cry” that needs to enter into our hearts in order to inspire us for actions.

I would like to share with you one of my experiences. On Christmas Eve, as usual, we prepared supper for the homeless. There are other people who come, too: the lonely, the elderly, the sick, in need of help, etc. Suddenly I met a man, who at first sight did not look homeless. However, I saw the pain in his eyes. I smiled and asked how he was. He answered: Sister, I am a lawyer, but a year ago I lost my job. My family kicked me out. I was left without anything and so I came to Caritas. The people who come here, to the dining room, are my new family. Every day we meet together and eat delicious food. But first of all and what the most important is for me and others too, we meet other people like ourselves and we meet you who minister here. It is important to share with one another good news, sometimes even pain, suffering and problems, because when we share our problems they become fewer and when we share our joys – they are doubled.



*“Without love a penny is rough, meal tasteless and the best care – unpleasant.” (St. Albert Chmielowski)*

S. Adriana Ormińska

## HOLY NAME PROVINCE Stella Niagara, New York

Holy Name Province is blessed with sisters, institutions, programs and associates that recognize the beauty and value of life and the dignity of every person. A good example of this is expressed in the goals of the Women’s Respite program:

- To provide respite for low-income women in the form of weekends away from home in a safe and welcoming environment. Programs include activities that promote health in body, mind and spirit.

- To decrease isolation among women and provide opportunities to form supportive relationship and a sense of community among the group.

Founded in 1989 to provide respite to single mothers with low income, the program has since expanded to include retreats for a variety of women. Reaching out to women who are raising children on their own, grandmothers who are raising grandchildren, women with cancer, or whose children are within the spectrum of autism, alumnae of previous retreats, welcoming and reverencing and pampering them, many for the first time in their lives. Their economic situations prevent them from ever experiencing moments of quiet, leisure, and having choices about activities for themselves. The programs provide participants with an opportunity to meet other women with similar experiences and to form a support network that extends beyond the weekend.



The Stella Niagara campus is offered as a place of comfort and hope, welcoming each woman regardless of race, religion, financial status or political affiliation. Massages, reiki, reflexology, swimming, discussion groups, meditation, movies, good food, arts and crafts, quiet times and quiet places, the beauty of the campus, treats and an outpouring of love from the sisters all combine to make this ministry uniquely life-giving. This is a moment in time that allows for each woman to begin realizing her importance in God's eyes, and in the hearts of those who work to provide these opportunities. The weekend begins on Friday evening, with orientation, dinner and free time. Over the next two days the women enjoy opportunities for rest, relaxation, individual and group activities, etc. surrounded by the beauty of Stella's natural setting.

This is all made possible by generous donors and the profits from an annual spaghetti dinner with basket raffle. Sisters, lay women and associates embrace this ministry and are renewed themselves as they reverently serve in the spirit of St. Francis.

S. Jolene Ellis

## **SACRED HEART OF JESUS PROVINCE** **São Leopoldo, Brazil**

The practices of reverence service at the Hospital Estrela

We use many strategies of daily life to serve with dignity at our hospital in Estrela. The list includes the following ways the sisters and our lay people are invited to care with respect and dignity to all persons:

- to care for the needs of sick people with respect, lovingness, empathy, human understanding of all the aspects of life;
- to provide comfort through all levels of the structures and to give emotional support in all the psychological and social needs;
- to assure a good treatment for all people, especially for pregnant women, and women and their children living in social vulnerability;



- to give support for the women in difficulties for transport and to welcome them in our Mother Magdalen House of Hospitality where the women can be near to their babies, when they are in prolonged treatment, giving the possibility to bond the relationship between mother and her child;
- to gather groups of parents to explain how to care for their babies, especially in situations of prematurity;
- to give opportunity to the parents of adolescents for a good therapy;
- to present different workshops to groups of parents and mentally sick people to encourage better relationships in social life;
- to promote actions in groups of different services which involve areas of health, education, social/cultural and spirituality of the community;
- to animate special service for people who use drugs, licit or illicit drugs, or people with mental disturbances;
- to offer spiritual activities and visits by lay people, the sisters and the priest;
- to offer spiritual support and visit sick people in the hospital; to be a presence in situations of death and for spiritual and affective support in time of challenges.



It is very important to provide excellent quality for our co-workers in different working areas of our hospital; to lead the workers in institutional strategies for better professional development, technical, ethical and spiritual development, for a strong vision in different situations, in the personal life and in works. This reflection is very clear in the words of our nurse, Maria Bernadete Koch Frantz, “The institution welcomes and supports her collaborators, in accepting them into the Franciscan Family, in sharing our charism of Mother Magdalen as we promote their personal growth. As we share our values, we recognize each human person. In the Franciscan philosophy, experience is sacred in being a Franciscan presence for each patient, each relative, each nurse or doctor -- in all situations and needs. Mother Magdalen’s charism gives us strength, faith, courage, humility, the possibility to learn what we do not understand in this moment. The remarkable thing is that we have a choice every day regarding the attitude of faith, respect and individuality. We try to care carefully for the differences and the dignity of each person who comes to the Estrela Hospital.

S. Teresia Sonia Steffen

## **SACRED HEART PROVINCE**

### **Denver, Colorado**

“Let there be dignity on earth and let it begin with me.”

In Sacred Heart Province we live from the value that respecting the dignity of others begins with respecting the dignity of ourselves. For that reason, first and foremost, we practice being present to our lovely incarnated selves and listening attentively for the voice of God who reflects our dignity back to us. Grounded in this humility we are able to converse with each other in ways that are meaningful, mutual, challenging, and respectful. This enhances our ability to relate to others in mission and ministry with dignity and respect.

One of the most valuable practices we have embraced for communal gatherings of discussion and discernment is The Circle Way, or as we call it, sacred circle conversation. The Circle Way was designed by U.S. Americans Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea using the ancient practice of groups gathering in circle to conduct the business and fortify the life of the group. In circle conversation the

person in each chair is a leader, responsible for giving to and receiving from the whole group as each person contributes toward the good of the whole. This calls us to listen for the voice of God in us personally, then contribute to the circle and listen for what emerges from the organic whole of the group.

The three key practices of The Circle Way are:

1. Speak with intention, noting what has relevance to the conversation in the moment.
2. Listen with attention, respectful of the learning process for all members of the group.
3. Tend the well-being of the circle, remaining aware of the impact of our contributions.



One example of how The Circle Way has worked for us is when some in our province wanted to seek new vocations and others did not. Amid a series of sacred circle conversations over the course of several province gatherings, we empowered a small group of sisters to explore the potential for new members. These sisters worked together for over a year and presented us with information at province gatherings which we took into sacred circle conversations. Through this process we discerned that we will no longer actively recruit new members into our common vowed life. Thanks to The Circle Way, each of us contributed to the conversations and listened for the voice of God in the whole of us. It was a painful discernment for our tiny and aging province and we were able to accept it from the heart of our faithful God.

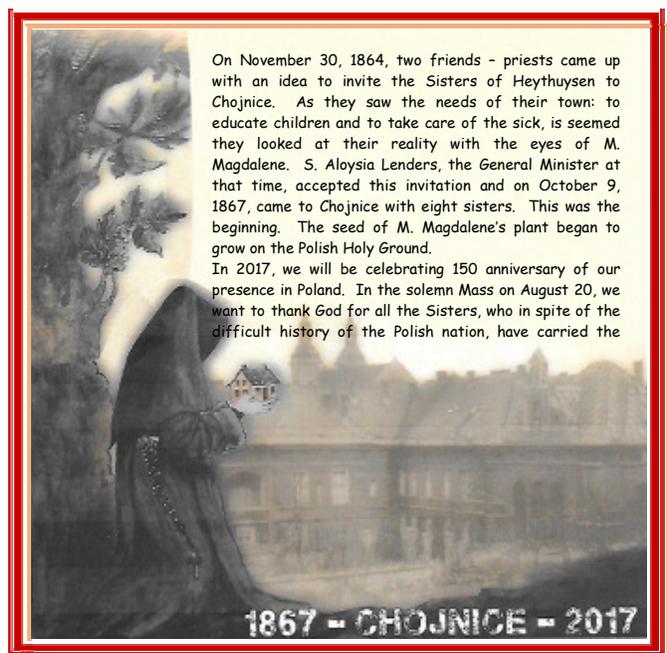
Sacred circle conversation has transformed our province and keeps us in a process of honoring each other's dignity. We have taken circle conversation into the marketplace as a way for groups to speak from their hearts and listen in discernment of a common direction. With practice over time, each person experiences their own dignity and that of others, transforming the way people relate to each other. To learn more about The Circle Way, visit <http://www.TheCircleWay.net/>.

S. Sue Artone-Fricke

## GENERAL COUNCIL SHARING

We rejoice together as two areas of our Congregation celebrate Jubilees in the coming months: Mary Help of Christians Province, Orlik, celebrates 150 years of Presence of our Sisters with the people of Poland and the interprovincial Mission of Mexico celebrates the past twenty-five years of presence among the people of Palenque. Let us hold our sisters in prayer in gratitude to God for the blessings that have come to the people of their prayer and ministry over the past years. We ask God's blessing on them as they continue to answer the guidance of the Spirit as God calls them daily.

**DEUS PROVIDEBIT!**





1992 ~ 2017  
**DIOS PROVEERÁ**

**25 YEARS of MISSION IN PALENQUE**  
**October 3 and 4, 2017**

**A celebration of...** **Earth** - God's gift of life  
**Water** - Nurturing life, the work of the community  
**Fire** - Love that binds us, gives us strength  
**Air** - Breath of God, guidance of the Spirit

The three North American Provinces invite the entire congregation to a prayer of gratitude and thanksgiving as we celebrate 25 years of Franciscan Presence in Chiapas. We remember most especially those who scattered the seeds from which the corn is now growing and yielding new seed.



Please pray for us in the coming months:

August 20	Celebration of 150 years of the presence of the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity among the Polish people, Chojnice
October	General Visitation: Mexico
October 3-4	Celebration of 25th Jubilee of the Mission in Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico
October/November	General Visitation: Stella Niagara
October/November	General Visitation: Redwood City and Denver
December 10-17	Provincial Chapter: Indonesia

The General Council: S. Deborah, S. Dirce, S. Patricia, S. Clara, S. Pacyfika