



# RSCW International Newsletter



Volume 1, June 2023

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For St. Madeleine Sophie communication was central to the exercise of her leadership, through letters she maintained the relationships, unity and governance of the Society.  
(Phil Kilroy)

With the RSCJ International Newsletter, we wish to encourage communication by sharing some of the events that may be of interest to the whole Society, with the desire to make it not simply a source of information, but a means by which we can know each other, be present to one another, and contact each other to deepen our understanding of topics of interest. It is also a means by which we report on the projects of the Solidarity Fund, the visits of the General Council, the work of the different international commissions and the key processes of initial formation in the Society. We would also like to share some of the initiatives that are emerging during the reorganization process.

Cover photo: María del Valle Adame RSCJ cares for a child at the Centre de Santé Anna du Rousier in Balan, Haiti

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# Visits to Provinces

## Visit to ANZ

**B**arbara Dawson and Anne Corry visited the province from February 4–13, 2023. Daphne Sequeira, who is the General Council link to the Province of ANZ, was unable to travel as intended because of a visa delay. However, she hopes to visit the province later in the year.

Between them, the General Council visited Auckland, Canberra, Brisbane and Sydney. They participated in RSCJ area gatherings in each place and with the whole province by Zoom.

They also met with the Sophia Education Ministries Board, who were meeting in Brisbane at the same time as the Council visit. All of the discussions at the various gatherings were rich and thoughtful.

At the conclusion of the visit, the General Council visitors and the provincial leadership team met together and talked about the challenges and gifts of this province.



Baradene College - Auckland, New Zealand  
Credit - photo taken from Heart Magazine



Marie-Jeanne and Mónica  
with the provincial team

## Visit to ESP

**T**he General Council, represented by Marie-Jeanne Elonga (link to the Province of Spain) and Mónica Esquivel, visited the Province of Spain from February 8-14. They met with various groups and commissions of the province, which

gave them a broad vision of their life and mission. They could sense the great vitality that characterizes them, learn about the processes they are living and the significant changes that have taken place since the last visit, a long road traveled in a short time!



They are undergoing an important process of internal and external restructuring. Internally, they are taking steps to share leadership with the laity, in constant discernment in order to make decisions in time and not wait for things to happen, because that way it will be more difficult. As some may remember, just a few years ago the provinces of northern and southern Spain experienced the process of forming the great province of Spain, and now they are moving towards the formation of a “new province” with Poland.

Their meetings were marked by how they are preparing to enter into a new way of organizing themselves as a Society. They were touched by some simple and meaningful initiatives, by a deep desire to be open to others and to reach each other. The councilors heard their desire not to get stuck in structures but to let their passion for the mission show them the way through the apostolic priorities. Their reflections and questions, far from being an obstacle to the process, have been a space for dialogue and listening, to better understand and carefully enter into this process.

Mónica and Marie-Jeanne returned with a grateful heart to this province, with the certainty that they have much to share with the Society, to shed light on the process they are all living.

*“They were touched by some simple and meaningful initiatives, by a deep desire to be open to others and to reach each other.”*



Elderly House of Algorta



Dai-ichi community in Tokyo

## Visit to JPN

**D**aphne Sequeira and Anne Corry had a wonderful visit to the Province of Japan from February 14 to 20, 2023.

The province welcomed the councilors warmly into their life. The leadership team had prepared for the visit very well. The Dai-ichi community looked after Daphne and Anne with great care throughout their stay.

Interacting with the communities over meals with informal conversations gave Daphne and Anne a good sense of province life.

The sisters in the eldercare community were very interested in inquiring about their co-probanists all over the world and what new things are happening in the Society. They had meaningful conversations with mission partners and sisters in their ministries and the age groups.

The Zoom gathering of the province offered a chance to dialogue about Society issues. The honest and deep sharing of each community during the provincial Zoom meeting was heartening.

Besides listening to individuals, visiting the Mikokoro center, the Global Plaza of the university, Sapporo, Obayashi, Sankocho schools, and the Casa de Amigo organization, the councilors were especially blessed to attend the solemn graduation ceremony at Susono School. This also provided an opportunity to interact with the parents.

In the midst of the letting go, they could feel a good preparation to welcome a new life being born in the new province.

## Visit to ENW

**B**arbara Dawson and Anne Corry visited the province from February 20-26, 2023. The visit was based in London where many of the ENW RSCJ are living. Those from places further afield generously gathered in London in order to make the most of the time available.

There were very lively meetings at every occasion, with the members of the province who gathered at the Stuart Centre at Roehampton, with the sisters from Duchesne House and with the lay staff who support the administration and care of the sisters in so many ways.

The Council members were very interested in the initiatives that the province is taking to uphold its legacy in England and Wales and they congratulate them as they prepare their celebration of 180 years of the Society's presence in England.



Barb and Anne with the ENW Provincial Team





## Visit to KOC

**B**arbara Dawson and Daphne Sequeira visited the Province of KOC from March 10 to 20, 2023.

They were very warmly welcomed at Taipei Airport by Choi and Eun Jeong. The Taipei community and then the Open community in Seoul looked after them with much love throughout their stay.

The provincial council had a full and inclusive plan for their visit. This gave them a chance to interact with many RSCJs individually and visit the ministries and communities to get to know the Society's life and mission as it is lived in Taiwan and Korea.

They had interactions and honest conversations in the ministries with the sisters, along with the collaborators in Taipei School, schools in Seoul, Barat Café,

Mohtungyi Village Café, and Saenl community. It was encouraging to see how the mission is lived with passion and zeal. It also helped the councilors understand their challenges and hopes for the future.

Deep and meaningful conversations with the sisters in various age groups, good questions in the provincial assembly and informal conversations in the communities over the delicious meals gave them a good flavor of the life of the province.

They were glad to see several innovative ministries and a reorganization of the communities to welcome young people. The province is creating a good process to welcome a new life being born in the "new province".

*"[There are] ...several innovative ministries and a reorganization of the communities to welcome young people. The province is creating a good process to welcome a new life being born in the "new province".*





# Projects Supported by Society Funds

## Mother House Solidarity Fund Projects

In 2022, the Mother House Solidarity Fund (MHSF) allocated twenty grants for a total of € 245,000. The Region of Africa received seven grants, ASIANZ three, Europe four and the Region of Philippine Duchesne six grants. The MHSF was glad to allocate a grant to the province of Egypt that had not applied for over twenty years. The projects, that are currently ongoing, focus on the spheres of health (special needs and HIV/AIDS), youth and education, people on the move and women in vulnerable situations.

In 2021, the Mother House Solidarity Fund (MHSF) supported twenty-five projects in the regions of Africa (10), ASIANZ (2), Philippine Duchesne (10) and Europe (3).

To give an idea of their impacts, here are the results from four of these projects (one from each region):

### Africa: Dental care, St. Charles Lwanga Health Centre, Chekalini, UGK

Chekalini had no dental service, and its population, which tends towards a high sugar diet and low dental hygiene, had to walk far for dental care and often could not afford the high costs.

The St. Charles Lwanga Health Centre has set up a dental care unit where a newly hired dentist technol-

ogist visits patients on a new dental chair. The dental unit also carries out awareness campaigns in local markets and in local public schools, where the dental technologist teaches dental hygiene, freely examines patients (which now number 150), and distributes toothpaste and toothbrushes.





*"The dental unit also carries out awareness campaigns in local markets and in local public schools, where the dental technologist teaches dental hygiene, freely examines patients (which now number 150), and distributes toothpaste and toothbrushes."*

**ASIANZ: Going organic, moving away from the margins.  
A training series on natural farming in Samar, PHI**

The objective of the project was to empower rural farmers with knowledge and skills, and to make them advocates of sustainable agriculture. Beneficiaries included practicing farmers, women, students, NEET (Not engaged in Education, Employment or Training), and people with disabilities.



Activities focused on training on organic agricultural skills, with 14 workshops on crop rotation, organic fertilising, pest control, disease protection, vermiculture, composting, waste management, and upcycling. Thanks to the partnership they developed with local authorities, participants acquired a national certification.

Eighty percent of participants took up agricultural initiatives in their own contexts, and local municipalities are planning to reproduce the training.

*"Eighty percent of participants took up agricultural initiatives in their own contexts."*





**Europe: ECO-Taller VERDE AROMA.  
Centro Penitenciario Madrid I Mujeres (ACOPE)  
(Eco workshop Green Aroma, Madrid I Women's Prison), ESP**

The “Taller Verde Aroma” (Green Aroma Workshop) took place in the women’s jail of Alcalá de Henares, Madrid. The goal of the project was to enhance the technical, professional, and social skills in green growing of 17 jailed adult women (70% Spanish).



The project ran workshops on aromatic and medicinal plants, floral decorations, and waste management. Some benefits included team work and solidarity, an increase in creativity and aesthetic sense, and improvements in punctuality, responsibility, independence, motivation, interest, and proactiveness.

By the end, 2,500 aromatic, medicinal plants and 840 litres of composting had been produced, a shed for tools had been built, and a blog was created for the plant nursery.

*"Benefits included...improvements in punctuality, responsibility, independence, motivation, interest, and proactiveness."*



Building the tool shed

**Philippine Duchesne: Tu médico en casa ahora con ambulancia  
(Your doctor at home, now with ambulance), VEN**



The economic crisis in Venezuela has considerably reduced public health services. Faced with this situation, a team of doctors designed a home care service for patients, your GP at Home, with accessible costs for the vulnerable population of Cumaná who cannot afford private care.

The “Con Ambulancia” (with ambulance) project extended the medical care to include transport of patients within the municipality and the state. A regular van was turned into an ambulance, and its addition to the medical service enabled more rapid responses to medical emergencies, which reduced medical complications. The ambulance brought light and hope to the vulnerable population, equality in access to medical care, and more lives were saved.



Inside the ambulance



# Mother House Funding to Special Projects

In 2022, the Mother House financed ten projects to support victims of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict, for a total of € 53,545, and twelve projects to respond to the needs of those heavily hit by the Covid pandemic, for a total of \$ 273,607.

The emergency fund allocated for the victims of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict is still operating and has supported seven more projects in 2023, some of them in cooperation with other congregations active in war zones.

## Covid Fund

The Generalate financed twelve projects in 2022, in regions severely impacted by the Covid pandemic: Africa (4), ASIANZ (3), and Philippine Duchesne (5).



### ASIANZ: Sadhna School, Sophia Campus, Mumbai, India

Sisters in India received funding to support students with special needs, as they return to ordinary, person-to-person interaction, which is very challenging given their disabilities. The teachers' main task was to bring students back to their daily routine, managing their behavioral issues using various strategies to calm their thoughts, worries and anxieties about being away from home.

### Africa: School in N'Djamena, Chad

Chad received financial support to provide materials for the provision of water to the community and the school, especially during hot weather. The project also included support for students whose parents cannot pay tuition fees, support for supervisors for online courses, and support for cleaning the school.



### Philippine Duchesne: Community of Michaihue, San Pedro de la Paz, Chile

The aim of this project is to work with training initiatives that help remedy the damage caused by the pandemic in the overall development of children and adolescents through a comprehensive plan: recovering and rebuilding learning and socio-emotional well-being.



## Ukraine Fund

In 2022, the Generalate financed ten projects in Poland for a total of € 53,545, where RSCJ sisters continue to give their support to Ukrainian refugees.

*"The project provided support to refugee families in adapting to a new country; organizing workshops for mothers and children; and promoting integration with the local community of families fleeing from war."*

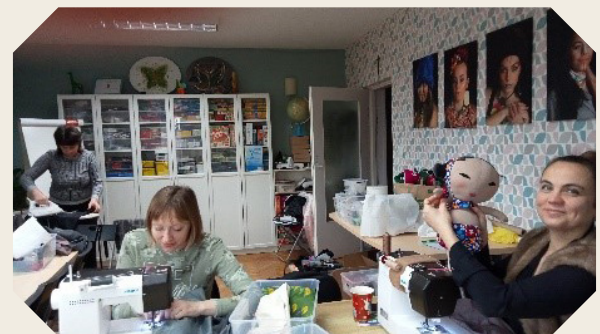
### Poland: Solidarity in Action. HELP POINT Project

The project, run in collaboration with the Dominican sisters and the local parish, and supervised by Bożena Kunicka RSCJ, provided food and hygiene items for Ukrainian refugees. A space was also created to welcome refugees and support them with basic items.



### Poland: Nuestra casa, es tu casa (Our house is your house)

The project, in collaboration with the Open Heart Foundation, founded by Urszula Głowacka RSCJ, provided support to refugee families (mothers with children) in adapting to a new country; organizing workshops for mothers and children; and promoting integration with the local community of families fleeing from war.



### Poland: "Person Development Center"

The focus of the "Person Development Center", run by the Open Heart Foundation, was supporting Ukrainian refugees in acquiring new professional skills and helping them find a job in Poland. Participants took part in a Polish language course and a tailoring and handicraft course.



# Villa Lante Formation Center

**C**asa Betania opened in November for the probanists, who are enjoying the newly renovated space. Casa Barat (the additional bedrooms, offices and community space) and Casa Stuart (the conference rooms, breakout rooms, and dining rooms), were completed in time to welcome the twenty-five RSCJ in the Renewal Program on March 19. The roof and structural renovations on the church are completed, but work on the interior as well as the work on the garden will continue into the summer months. The International Planning Committee and International Education Commission will stay and meet at the Villa Lante in June, and a new probation group will return in September, along with several other committees and groups whose missions are aligned with that of the Society. As stated in other newsletters and updates, the Villa Lante will not have a bed and breakfast for individuals in Rome for meetings or sight-seeing, but rather will only be open to groups of eight or more, whose missions are part of or align with our mission.

The General Archives, located at the Villa Lante, contain treasures of the Society's history that are lovingly cared for by our three very capable archivists. The new Villa Lante Center for Lay and Religious Formation is also providing expanded opportunities for their service in making known the heritage of the Society.



## The Changing Roles at the General Archives

### Federica Palumbo General Archivist

Federica's responsibility is to care for the printed and digital documents in the General Archives at the Villa Lante, including the archives of the Generalate, the provincial archives of Italy and the closed provinces of Belgium, France, and the Netherlands, as well as the archives library.

One part of her work as a general archivist is to organize older documents so that they can be consulted publicly, to store and conserve them properly, and to make some digitally accessible in the AtoM (Access to Memory) archival software, in compliance with the latest international archival standards and with the aim of making them available to researchers.



The Archivists: Sara, Alice and Federica

For more recent material received from the central offices and elsewhere, her job is to assess, evaluate, and organize them and put them in a searchable format, according to the Society's policy and national and international laws. Another part of the job is to assist RSCJ or the general public in doing historical research in the archives of the Society.

Lately, Federica has started coordinating with some provincial archivists to improve communications among provincial archivists, with the aim of sharing knowledge and resources among the Society's archivists in a more structured and systematic way.

### *What's New at the General Archives?*

- *Digital access to older documents via the AtoM archival software*
- *Digitization of most of Madeleine Sophie's letters*
- *The museum in the new Villa Lante Center for Lay and Religious Formation, which will present the story of the Society's foundation and expansion.*



Crucifix on illuminated pages – 19th c  
One of the museum's artifacts

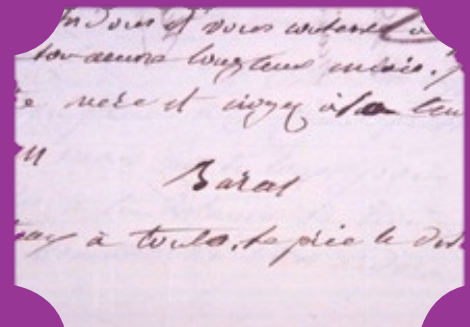
### **Alice Usai, Curator of the Villa Lante Museum and of the Audio-visual and Material Heritage of the Society**

Alice recently celebrated ten years of working at the General Archives. During these years, she has learned a lot about the Society's history and administration. Through the audiovisual heritage that is preserved at the General Archives, it is possible to have a special view of the history of the Society. Alice's responsibility is to organize and inventory the photos, plates and audiovisual material for AtoM. Her work is also to inventory the artifacts stored in the General Archives and to structure a narration for the museum display.

This last year has been devoted to the museum in the new Villa Lante Center for Lay and Religious Formation: two new spaces aimed at preserving the culture and history of the Society and presenting the story of its foundation and expansion, with particular attention given to the role of the Villa Lante. These spaces will be inaugurated by the end of 2023.

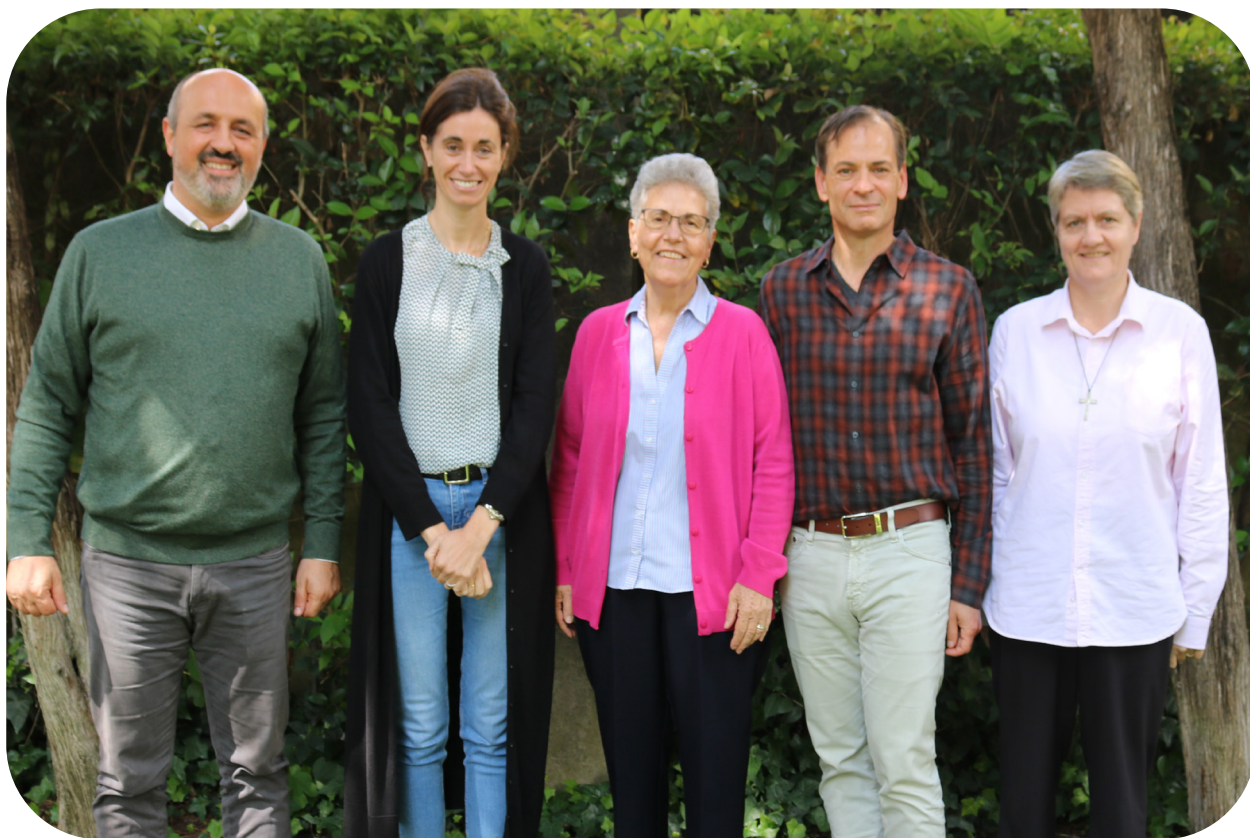
### **Sara Giannetti Assistant Archivist**

Sara has been working for the Society for four years, and her work at the archives is primarily to digitize documents. She cares for the collection of Madeleine Sophie Barat's writings, and has digitized most of her 14,000 extant letters, where necessary using Photoshop, a digital retouching software, to increase their readability. She has also helped create brochures about the Villa Lante for visitors and the probation groups.





# International Commissions and Teams



## International Finance Committee

2023 marked the appointment of the **International Finance Committee (IFC)** in its new formation.

The IFC, at its first meeting in Rome in May 2023, will focus on how to manage the finances of the Congregation in light of the decisions taken at the Special Chapter 2021, with a view to sharing resources as *Cor Unum*.

The new members of the Committee are:



**Pilar Valencia Lovelle**, from Madrid, Spain. She has worked for the Society since 2016 as Assistant to the Provincial Treasurer of Spain, Begoña Plágaro. Previously, she was mainly involved in financial control, consulting and auditing.

**Fr. Martin Rocha Pedrajo**, brother of the Lasallian Christian School, was born in San Luis Potosí, Mexico. With professional qualifications in administration, theology and education, he has been involved in formation activities, first as a teacher, then as vice-rector and finally rector of La Salle University. He was Provincial of the District of Antilles-Mexico and currently serves as Treasurer General of the Congregation.



**Sr. Teresa Ryden RSCJ**, originally from Liverpool, United Kingdom, joined the Society in 1994 and is currently the Treasurer, Secretary and Archivist of the District of Indonesia, where she has been since 2014. Previously she worked as an assistant in the Finance Office of the Province of England-Wales.



**Erick Odmark**, from San Francisco, California, in the United States. He is a management consultant who advises a wide range of non-profit institutions, families, and investment firms on issues related to



governance, strategy, and investments. For the past 18 years, he has run his own firm and he previously worked at Bain & Company and Pricewaterhouse Coopers. The Society of the Sacred Heart has long used his services.

**Simone Mazza**, from Rome, Italy, is certified as a CPA and statutory auditor. He has been working for the Society of the Sacred Heart since 2017 as CFO of the Province of Italy. Since 2022, he has also worked with the Generalate, overseeing the accounting of the Society of the Sacred Heart and the Duchesne Fund. Previously, he worked at accounting and consulting firms, and co-founded a consulting firm specializing in strategic financial planning and debt restructuring. He is currently on the board of auditors at a number of charitable organizations in Rome.



**Sr. Georgina Zubiría RSCJ** is a professor and theologian from Mexico. She is currently serving as Treasurer General of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Previously she has served in various leadership, administrative and financial positions, combining them with theological and educational activities, including that of Provincial of Mexico, Treasurer of the Province on two occasions, Director of the Center for Theological Studies of the Conference of Religious of Mexico and member of the theological team of the Latin American Conference of Religious.







## International Planning Commission

**T**he International Planning Commission (IPC) members are now Elizabeth Nakayiza, Imma de Stefanis, Paqui Rodríguez, Jacquelin Jiménez and Ananda Amritmahal. Claire Castaing ended her participation after the Assembly of Provincials, as she has now been delegated by the Superior General as canonical superior of Egypt.

From January 16 to 20, the IPC met together with Erick Odmark in Rome. Unfortunately, due to health problems, Jacquelin was unable to participate. The purpose of this meeting was two-fold. Now that the first phase of our work, i.e., designing a plan for restructuring the Society, was complete, the group felt the need to undertake an evaluation of our work and our functioning as a team so far, and also to plan the next steps in our work as a commission in close collaboration with the General Council. To this end, the first two days of our week together were spent, with facilitator Manuela Schaffran, looking back to determine what had worked, what had not worked, what we would like to do differently, etc., and then applying that learning to map out the way ahead.

The second part of the meeting was spent in working out the details of the roadmap for the months ahead. This included exploring ways of accompanying the

proposed new provinces as they began the implementation of the plans they had outlined in Malaga; further developing the actualization of the networking and the exchange of expertise and experience projected in the apostolic priorities; streamlining our channels of communication with the General Council and the Society at large; and working together more effectively to create a smooth process of transition from the present moment to the General Chapter 2024. Goals, both short-term and long-term, were articulated and timelines charted. These details were shared with the General Council at the end of the meeting.

We were particularly happy to have had the opportunity to work closely with the General Council (we had three afternoons with them) in planning the process for the next few months. Having Sr. Georgina Zubiría, the Canonical Treasurer General, with us as well helped us to anchor our planning in reality. All felt, at the end of the meeting, that the week had been productive, paving the way to a year of systematic, sustained, and fruitful work ahead. We are already on that path, and we hope that the next few months will see us all moving forward together to the vision beckoning us onwards.





Saint Madeleine Sophie Foundation  
in the Philippines

## JPIC International Team

In line with what we planned during our October meeting in Manila, the JPIC International Team has been trying to synergize our activities. We are putting greater effort into focusing on an identified theme which provides a backdrop and allows us to give a stronger voice to our message of hope.

Here are two examples:

1. For the theme of “Peace,” we shared resources on the 56th World Day of Peace, published an infographic on Demography, and featured Artisans of Hope from the Province of Korea who are working for peace.
2. For the focus on “Education,” the UN-NGO Office organized a webinar entitled “Changing Course, Transforming Education” on International Day of Education (January 24). We prepared an infographic on “Learning Poverty” and featured Artisans of Hope from Saint Madeleine Sophie Foundation in the Philippines.

We continue to provide resources to the Family of the Sacred Heart by making presentations as requested by some of our provinces, preparing prayer guides with the help of RSCJ from different parts of the world, updating the JPIC Database, and publishing JPIC-related materials on the website of the JPIC Learning Hub. We collaborate with networks within the Society.

Most recently on March 8, we worked with the Core Team of the European Network of Sacred Heart Schools in organizing a student conference: “Working Together to Save the World.” It was inspiring to see how students from Sacred Heart schools in ten European countries interacted with one another and shared how they are responding to our JPIC imperative to care for our common home.

Finally, for a year now, we have been able to sustain the First Friday Prayer for Peace. We are happy that a significant number of RSCJ and communities participate in this shared moment of silence and prayer.





## Ongoing Formation Team

In late March, twenty-five sisters from thirteen provinces gathered in the renovated Villa Lante to begin a six-week renewal program. Initiated in 2019 for sisters between 55 and 75 years of age, two sessions had been held and two were scheduled for 2020 but were postponed because of Covid. Finally, those sisters were able to gather and begin their renewal.

The program developed by the Ongoing Formation Team, Kathleen Conan (USC), Digna Dacanay (PHI) and Mariado Górriz (ESP) has had three major themes, concluding with a retreat. The first focused on Personal Growth and Integration; Mariajo Iribarren (ESP) helped explore dimensions of our emotional life, while Mariado invited participants to re-read their journey from the perspective of scripture, this stage of their lives and the ongoing invitation of God to fullness of life.

In the theme of mission, Paloma Fernández de la Hoz (CEU) gave

sessions integrating a broad understanding of many of the realities of the world today with the vision of *Laudato Si'*, *Fratelli Tutti* and synodality. Input from Nathalie Becquart XMCJ and Maria Cimperman (USC) sparked our commitment to the synodal processes. Exposure experiences at centers that respond to the needs of migrant people helped us touch one of today's realities.

The third theme was the life of the Society today. After reflecting on the core of their vocation, participants engaged in some of the current work around apostolic priorities, and held “mini-provincial chapters” with people from their new provinces. The Central Team led a morning of dialogue on these topics and

others. The week ended with input on spirituality from Mariola López (ESP), which prepared the participants for the personally accompanied retreat.

The participants are now returning to their provinces with a renewed sense of vocation and broader understanding of and commitment to the ongoing journey of the Society.



Exposure experience at San Giacomo

## International Vocation Commission

The International Vocation Commission (IVC) believes that prayer is the foundation of the vocation ministry, and as a commission they have regularly invited the whole Society to pray for vocations on the 25th of each month. This has been possible with the collaboration of RSCJ from around the world, who generously prepare the prayer, which the commission then makes available in the three languages of the Society.

Meetings with the provincial and regional vocation ministry teams offer a space to share what each province is doing for vocations. Everyone learns from each other and accompanies each other in the service entrusted to them. They are encouraged by the certainty that there are young women searching for meaning and by their desire to respond to God's call in their lives.

The commission invites young people to a day of spiritual reflection and prayer twice a year using social media and Zoom, which offers the opportunity to meet with each other and with God. The topics discussed are along the lines of the JPIC calls: washing one another's feet; transforming and being transformed; care for our common home; and welcoming people on the move.

The commission has also held international welcoming community meetings by Zoom, where they have shared their experiences, having communities focus on young adults and women interested in getting to know more about the Society.

In addition, there are a lot of initiatives being launched within the different provinces:

- Reyna González has developed the "Sacred Heart DNA" program, based in USC Province but open to young people in all provinces.
- The Province of Mexico has developed a social media channel focused on young adults: @Juventudes\_rscjmexico on Instagram
- Korea is creating a welcoming community for women who are interested in getting to know the Society.
- Hungarian PTVs are collaborating with the Province of Spain and are running a MAGIS prayer dance experiment in Spain. The Hungarian novices are travelling to Portugal with a youth group of ninety people, while RSCJ will collaborate with MAGIS (the Jesuit network).

The vocation ministry reflection is part of the probation program, and the commission had the opportunity to listen the experiences of and share their service with the probanists as they prepared to take their final vows. Finally, the IVC enables sisters involved in the vocation ministry to meet, get together and share experiences. This is why they have developed the online vocation library, accessible through the intranet (<https://rscjinternational.org/vocations>). The library supports the work of vocation ministers with various methodological materials.







## International Education Commission

The International Education Commission has continued to work via Zoom on developing both the *Philosophy of Sacred Heart Education* and the *Profile of the Sacred Heart Educator*. It is their intention to meet in Rome at the end of June to refine these documents and determine how best to share these drafts with the Society as a whole.

They are grateful for the chance to meet in person so that they can ensure that the essential concepts of the philosophy and profile are articulated effectively in the three languages used in the Society, capturing the nuances of meaning in one language versus another. The objective is to develop a contemporary philosophy of Sacred Heart education with an emphasis on humanization. This philosophy will be simple, straight-forward and direct, and can be used in any setting where the Society and its lay mission partners are engaged in apostolic work. The commission will also propose essential elements to the Formation to Mission Program, especially in light of the apostolic priorities.

## Commission on International Volunteers

The Covid-19 pandemic put a halt to the sending of international volunteers to other provinces in many parts of the world, but during that period the Commission on International Volunteers (CIV) was able to help some provinces that had wanted to develop an international volunteers program in their own provinces and could host Zoom meetings with the link persons. Starting in the second half of 2021, some provinces started to resume the regular activities of the international volunteers program. Then, in 2022, they resumed the training, sending and receiving of volunteers.

The provinces of BFN and ESP sent several volunteers to many countries in Europe (ESP), Africa (UGK, RDC-TCH, EGY), Latin America (ARU, CHI, MEX, PER) and Asia (PHI). The Province of Poland started an international volunteers program to send volunteers to CEU and UGK. The Province of Japan received a volunteer for the first time in 2023, from the Province of Mexico. The volunteers rendered services in each country for both formal and non-formal educational activities for children and young people, for indigenous communities, for farms, for the promotion of women and in the medical field. One of the main objectives of the in-



international volunteers program is for the volunteers to get to know the life and the mission of the Society through this service. The Commission is happy to connect the world through the presence of international volunteers and their service in our ministries. "Chio" (Rocío Villanueva RSCJ) of the Province of Peru, who had contributed a lot to the organization of the international volunteers program as a member of the Commission, returned to God last year. For certain, she is smiling in heaven to see the successes of the international volunteers program in different provinces now.

*"For certain, she is smiling in heaven to see the successes of the international volunteers program in different provinces now."*

## International Communications Office

This year, the International Communications Office is pursuing a number of initiatives aimed at bringing the Society closer together. In addition to the new website and new newsletter format, a network of Sacred Heart communicators is being formed, which will involve all of the Society's technology/communications teams. This is aimed at creating connections between the teams in different provinces and working together to define what is needed in terms of communications both as provinces and as a Society. Another initiative will involve building a strategic communication committee that will look at ways to better communicate the life and mission of the Society. Also, a support team is being formed for translations of articles and materials from English to Spanish and French. If anyone, RSCJ or layperson, would like to collaborate as part of this team, please contact Margaret.

Finally, throughout the year, Margaret will begin to define and implement communications channels and tools for General Chapter 2024, such as a dedicated website and templates. Stay tuned!

If you have some feedback or suggestions for improvement, please send these to [comms@rscjroma.org](mailto:comms@rscjroma.org).

# New Novice and New Candidates in the Society

## New Novice and New Candidates in RDC-TCH

**T**here are two new candidates and one new novice in RDC-TCH: Dorothée Kilwese and Marie Mvondo are first-year candidates, while Eunice Nzila is a first-year novice. The postulancy and novitiate are located in Kimwenza, Democratic Republic of Congo. All three entered the postulancy and novitiate on the same day, September 10, 2022 and all three are Congolese. They follow courses in their community with their teachers and also at the inter postulancy and inter novitiate.



New Novice Eunice Nzila  
(RDC-TCH)



New Candidate Dorothée Kilwese  
(RDC-TCH)



New Candidate Marie Mvondo  
(RDC-TCH)

## New Candidate in ESP Alba Romero Gangonells



**A**lba moved to Bilbao to begin her time as an RSCJ candidate in the Rekaldeberri community. She works for a few hours teaching first aid in two higher vocational training courses, and has also begun studying some theology subjects. In addition, she does some pastoral and social volunteer activities.



# Life in the Society Novitiate

## ASIANZ Novitiate



**O**n January 27 of this year, the novices moved from Sophia House, where they had stayed for nine months, to the newly constructed ASIANZ Novitiate in Montalban. At present, the formation community is composed of five professed sisters, two second-year novices and six in their first year. At the moment, the two second-year novices, Norlissa and Theresa, are having their 30-day retreat with Kathy Conan as Retreat Director at the Jesuit Retreat House outside Montalban. They

live internationality as a multicultural community of sisters from six countries. Interculturality is the mark of the richness of their life together as One Body.

In Montalban, the novices find joy in taking a regular part-time ministry with the preschool children of the St. Madeleine Sophie Foundation (SMSF). They also had an opportunity to visit a community of migrant indigenous families (Aetas) living along the banks of Montalban River. They brought them food and a week's supply of milk for the children and rice for the families. These are new apostolic activities that they had no opportunity to experience while living in Sophia House, especially during the pandemic.

A few days after their arrival in Montalban, they received an invitation to attend a vocation promotion event on the theme of

synodality in a nearby parish, an opportunity for them to introduce the presence of the RSCJ in the Diocese of Antipolo where they now belong, and meet young people and sisters from other congregations involved in youth ministry.

They were happy to meet their local parish priest and were also welcomed by the parish priest in the big church in town, where they can go for an English Mass on Sundays.

The next event was the blessing of the Novitiate Prayer Room on March 10 by the Bishop of their Diocese, Bishop Francisco de Leon, DD.

Leaving the comforts of Sophia House was not easy for the novices but they were also excited at the thought that “God is doing a new thing in their life and He will make a way...”.



## International English-speaking Novitiate in Chicago

The formation program of the International Novitiate in Chicago is quite varied, and includes the interreligious novitiate program, classes at Catholic Theological Union (CTU), and some seminars on various Society topics given by different RSCJ. They have had some meetings with Noemí, the Mexican novice who is doing her novitiate in Chile.

In February, the novices had their month-long retreat. In October, Ellen Collesano will finish her service as Director of Novices in Chicago and leave for the ASIANZ novitiate where she will continue this service. Meanwhile, at the Chicago novitiate, Panni (Anna Csókási from CEU) will start as Director of Novices. It is expected that by then there will be two new novices in this novitiate, one from ESP and one from CEU.

## Interprovincial Novitiate in Chile

Noemí Martínez, a novice from Mexico, has finished her novitiate in Chile and will spend the last phase before her first vows in an apostolic community in Mexico. The Mater novitiate community in Chile, in which Noemí deepened her call, was formed by Sofía Baranda (CHI), María del Carmen Espinosa de los Monteros (ESP) and Celia Salinas (MEX). It was an international formation community, in the town of Reñaca Alto, in which all the professed sisters participated in formation. It also involved sisters from other parts of the Society, either in person or online, and had a broad apostolate in which all were involved.

Celia was accompanying the process of evaluation and reformulation of the apostolic project, as well as offering a bible workshop throughout the year, while Mary Carmen focused on the history of the Society and Madeleine Sophie in a bi-weekly workshop.

Sofía, as mistress of novices, has accompanied her, directed her spiritual exercises and helped her to deepen her knowledge of the Constitutions through a personal itinerary of readings, reflection and promoting dialogues with several RSCJ at the international level.

Noemí also participated in the courses of the Conference of Religious of Chile for novices. She has been studying English with the help of Nora Bourke, RSCJ from Ireland.

Unfortunately for the moment there are no vocations in the Philippine Duchesne Region, so it was with sorrow that the decision was made to close this beloved novitiate.

The General Council is grateful to all the people who have made possible the realization of this project, especially to the province of Chile that welcomed it, to each of the sisters who have been part of the formation community at different times, and to those who have collaborated from time to time in person or online. They are also grateful to the people of Reñaca Alto, who have accompanied the novices in their formation process. On the one hand, the RSCJ community has served the community of Reñaca Alto in many ways and, on the other hand, the people of this community have enriched the life of the sisters by sharing their lives, their struggles, and their faith.

Let us accompany Noemí with our prayers at this time of preparation for the profession of her first vows! And let us pray for vocations in this corner of the Society.



Far left, Noemí, third from left, Celia, second from right, Sofía

# New Members in the Society

## Celebrating First Vows in UGK

**K**omweru Cellina, Nabisenke Veneranda Virgo and Nakagera Francisca Gyaviira made their first vows on December 29, 2022 at the Mbikko novitiate house. The ceremony was presided over by Fr. Joseph King, a Mill Hill priest and their vows were received by the UGK Provincial, Sr. Anamaria Nankusu. Many people attended the celebration, including all the sisters in the province, their parents and some family members, some parishioners, some religious men and women from other congregations, and some of our collaborators.

[Watch a video of highlights from the ceremony](#)

[Read the article on RSCJ International](#)







## Celebrating First Vows in ANZ

**A**s Mass for the Feast of the Annunciation was celebrated in Sydney, there was joy as Deasy Hartanto professed her first vows in the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Province of Australia-New Zealand on March 25, 2023.

The ceremony was presided over by Bishop Terry Brady, a good friend of many RSCJ, and vows were received by the ANZ Provincial, Lynette Toohey. Diana Hayes RSCJ provided a reflection connecting Mary's "Fiat" with Deasy's commitment.

Deasy's father and brother were able to join us from Surabaya, Indonesia, and her sister from Brisbane.

Her mother was unable to be with us but was able to watch on YouTube. We were joined by a number of RSCJ, some of our partners in mission, and friends of Deasy. The YouTube recording made the celebration available to many, including RSCJ, in other parts of the world.

[Watch the celebration here](#)

[Read the article on RSCJ International](#)

# Probation and Profession

## Closing Conference and Profession Ceremony

The Closing Conference of Probation 2022-2023 was held on Wednesday, March 22, 2023 at the Villa Lante. Here Katalin (CEU), Adriana (INS), Filomena (INS), Yolanda (INS), Barbara (IRS), Linda (PER), and Alicja (POL), received their probation name, “God’s Love Sets Us Free”, and their devise, “Go forth and live the word of God”.

The Profession Ceremony was held on Saturday, March 25 at the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere. The icon of Jesus’s encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, which was the icon of this probation, accompanied them during the ceremony.

The Mass was presided over by Fr. Douglas Marcouiller SJ and Fr. Edgar Sánchez de la Torre MSpS. After the solemn Profession of Vows, Barbara Dawson presented the probanists with their crosses and rings, and welcomed them as permanent RSCJ with a warm hug. She then sent each one to her new mission. The Profession Ceremony was followed by lunch at the Villa Lante with RSCJ, friends, and loved ones. The Society is delighted to welcome these seven new sisters as fully professed religious!

[Watch a slideshow of the Profession Ceremony](#)

[Watch a video of the entire Profession Ceremony](#)

[Read about the Closing Conference](#)



## Probation 2023-2024

The next probation will take place at the Villa Lante, beginning on September 11, 2023, and the Opening Conference will be on the 14th. The new probation team is Christine Mukoko and Gerardette Philips and the probanists are Nataly Chamorro Martínez (CHI), Gloria Díaz (COL), Barbara Helena Olejnik (POL), Nancy Mabakuka Lutumba (RDC-TCH), Ruth Lema-Mpese (RDC-TCH), Mary Atukunda (UGK), Mercyline Imali Amalemba (UGK), and Evelyn (Uchenna) Oluoha (USC).

Gloria, Barbara, Mary and Mercyline are already doing their international experiences, which you can read about below.

# International Experiences

## Barbara Helena Olejnik (POL) My International Experience in Peru

**O**n September 27, 2022, I started my international experience in Peru, at the San Genaro community in Lima. When I arrived, I was struck by the fact that the windows and doors were open in the community. When I prayed, the life outside was drawn inside - the neighbors and all the people who worked there were in my heart. The culture and affection I received from the sisters helped me to feel at home here.

During the first month, I attended a Spanish course and participated in the mission at Colegio Sagrado Corazón Chalet. Every day I would meet the students at the school gate and it gave me great joy to spend time here.

In Peru, there is a very nice custom that on the feast of the Foundation of the Congregation the Professed of Temporary Vows renew their vows, as I did with Jaqueline Salazar, going then to the community in Layo, in southern Peru. Every Sunday we visited the communities of Catholics who lived far from the church there. Layo is located at an altitude of 4,000 meters above sea level. Due to climate change, the air is getting harsher and colder. As I met children with burnt hands and cheeks, I realized how interconnected we are and that these changes affect the most vulnerable. I hold in my heart the certainty that *Artisans of Hope in Our Blessed and Broken World* can help us to work more effectively towards structural and systemic change.

For five months I lived with the sisters of the Province of Peru, and we shared several important moments: the illness and passing of Rocío Villanueva, the retreats, the Provincial Assembly. Thanks to this experience, I feel more part of the international community.



Luz Estela, Rosario, Elisa, Carmela, Pamela, Viviana, Barbara, Camu, Iris, Luz Zoila, Nancy, Pilar, Karla, (below) Silvia, Magdalena, Maria Luisa, Elizabeth, Lelia, Jaquelin, Betza



Barbara Olejnik with Mrs. Augusta, the coordinator of the Collachapi community.



# Mary Atukunda (UGK)

## My International Experience in Indonesia

The first thing that impressed me from my experience, which went from January to February 2023, was the kindness of people on the journey. My sisters in the new community are wonderful, and I received a warm welcome by Srs. Maureen and Teresa as soon as I arrived at the airport.

I work in two ministries but am mostly busy with the kindergarten in our community in Jakarta, where I have learned that personality development begins in childhood, with some children being more talkative, playful, hardworking, and vice versa.

In working with these little children I have experienced the spirit of asking for forgiveness, when they realize and admit when they have hurt each other. Without the teacher's guidance, I have seen most of them shake hands and look into another's eyes, looking deeply for reconciliation, and this has left an indelible mark on my heart.



With the kindergarteners in Jakarta

Another ministry is for primary children (8 to 12 years), where I go with Sr. Maureen to help out. She teaches English once a week; there is a great need in Indonesia for English teaching and I have observed the joy when teachers and learners are able to express themselves using English.

We also had a District Assembly in late January, which was a wonderful experience for me. Here I was able to hear some insights about the meeting of provincials in Malaga, and I appreciated that language is our greatest challenge to moving forward with our four major calls (JPIC, Spirituality, Education and Formation) at the same pace.

I sometimes visited our neighborhood community of Bogor. It was a wonderful experience for me, especially when we engaged in the distribution of food to the poor.



With RSCJ for District Assembly in January 2023

*"I have seen most of them shake hands and look into another's eyes, looking deeply for reconciliation, and this has left an indelible mark on my heart."*

## Mercyline Amalemba (UGK)

### My International Experience in the Philippines

I arrived in the Philippines, Quezon City on December 27, 2022 and settled into the Risen Christ Community. The warm welcome I received from my sisters made me feel at home, calming the anxiety of living in a new country.

There are ten RSCJ at Risen Christ Community, where I have deeply experienced our spirit of *Cor Unum*. This experience has expanded my horizon in terms of our spirituality, cultural differences, and creativity at prayer. I feel connected with Mother Earth through various practices like the sorting of rubbish, good stewardship of available resources, and sharing food with the less fortunate.

While here, I have reached out to the Sophia Community and the novitiate community, and my encounter with them has been life-giving. Apart from sharing life with my sisters, I attend lectures at St Vincent School of Theology, in a class of 31 students. The class is mostly comprised of seminarians, a few lay people, priests and nuns. I also attend lectures for religious studies at the Institute of Consecrated Life Asia. We have selected topics for the candidates preparing for final vows. I find the content from the two institutes essential and helpful, as it touches my daily life as a religious.



Every fourth Sunday of the month we read a prayer for vocations at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Cubao

At the beginning of this year, we had several celebrations in the community. For instance, Sonia Aldeguer celebrated her 50th anniversary since her final profession and Ester Salvosa celebrated her ninety-first birthday. I feel deeply connected with my sisters at prayer and at meals, a sign of God among us.

*"This experience has expanded my horizon in terms of our spirituality, cultural differences, and creativity at prayer."*

## Gloria Díaz (COL)

### My International Experience in India



Torpa Community - Renewal of Mukta's Vows

**B**efore coming to the Province of India for my international experience, I spent three months in the Province of England-Wales improving my English. I am very grateful to God and to our sisters for the wonderful experience I had there, for their generosity and love. Every day I experienced, the places I visited, the language academy, the RSCJ and the people I met were a gift, a great blessing from the Lord.

Arriving in India was like landing in a giant kaleidoscope: colorful, multicultural, diverse, pluralistic, with smiling, hospitable and friendly people. It is in this blessed land that I am living my international experience and delving into our Cor Unum. The sisters of this province have

diverse and fruitful apostolates, through which they reveal God's love, in big cities like Mumbai and in small villages like Torpa, Haregaon and Bhokar, to boys and girls, people with different abilities, students, university students, teachers, trainers, volunteers, and collaborators.

When I was about to start my journey through the small villages where our communities are located, the sisters gave me typical

Indian clothes (salwar kameez). Receiving those clothes was for me like a sacrament, like the vestments the priest wears to celebrate the Eucharist. I felt that my sisters were telling me through these vestments: Gloria, we welcome you with affection, we share our culture with you and we send you to our people so that, in their midst and together with our sisters, you may live our mission and go and tell them how much God loves them.

That is why, when someone tells me I look like an Indian, my heart leaps with joy and I sing, praise and thank God for the wonders that His love has worked in this blessed Province of India and for calling us to be artisans of hope in this broken and blessed world.



In the nursery at Mumbai



# Something New Is Happening in the Society!

## Exchanging Cultures in Poland and Spain

**W**e know we are travelers today in 2023, as yesterday and always, but what and who are leading us on this journey, where are we going, and how are we getting there?

We read in the Plan of Government of the Province of Spain for this period of three years: "To look to the future with hope, collaborating in the transforming work of God".

Barbara, in her letter of December 15, 2022, speaks to us of: "Working with all of you to create 'something new' for the sake of our mission and our life."

This "something new" that appeared on the horizon in 2016 is present today, which encourages the congregation and seems to tell us: go ahead, now! We have confidence in those who lead us, for having accepted consciously, with courage and risk-taking, these positions of leadership. Thank you!

And what is the work in this "transforming work of God" for us, a community of 34 RSCJ, very elderly, from 80 to more than 100 years of age?

We took our curious first steps by consulting the catalog of the number of Polish religious and their ages; we were interested in their apostolic tasks. We visited many of their houses online, we liked their dances. We have even tried to learn a few words in Polish, with disastrous results.

The main thing is that our minds and hearts feel closer to our sisters in Poland. We have made room for them in our prayers. Our spaces and this precious sea are open to receive them, so that we can walk together.

We welcome what we learn from their youth, their language, their folklore, their ideals, their tenacity in difficulties and their strength in the impossible. May we know how to give them something of the infinite accumulated in our history.

In this unprecedented exchange, will we know what is from Spain and what is from Poland?

*Lolita Monedero RSCJ*



## Building and Transforming in Mexico

During the week of January 24-27, 2023, we held our Provincial Assembly in the city of Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, the intention of which was to meet, listen to each other and dialogue from our identity as RSCJ in shared mission with the laity; to look with hope at the congregational and provincial journey from the apostolic priorities; and to open ourselves to the action of the Spirit, in communion with the Society of the Sacred Heart.



Photo of the participants in the Provincial Assembly of Mexico: RSCJ, lay women and the assembly facilitator

Some of our sisters from the Provinces of Antillas - María del Valle Adame and Nati Hernández - and United States-Canada - Reyna González, Paula Gruner and Associate Kristi Laughlin - participated in this assembly, and they shared with us some elements of the social context they are living in their countries of origin.

We value and recognize the fruits of the Assembly of Provincials at the end of last year and from there we feel called to walk with the international Society. Our

steps will be an expression of knowing and feeling ourselves rooted in Jesus, committed to his Kingdom; taking care of our sense of communion and inner life, aware of our reality and diversity; and remaining open to the Spirit in this new moment we are living.

Undoubtedly, another moment in which we saw a lot of enthusiasm was the exercise we did with the lay women around the apostolic priorities. It was a dynamic that began with a personal choice, in which we placed ourselves according to our interest in one of the priorities. We then moved on to a group level, in which we reflected together on the articulation and synergy that we can generate through each of the apostolic priorities. We discovered a world of possibilities that we then shared in an atmosphere of great hope.

We confirmed that:

- Something new is being born, with a global vision... with local action... with our feet on the ground, our eyes on the horizon.
- Something new is being born with and among the mission collaborators as protagonists.
- Something new is being born.... we are connected and interconnected... from there we make a difference.
- Something new is being born ... open to ... change and transformation.



María del Valle Adame (center, ANT) Mariela Peña (left, MEX) and Graciela Cervantes (right, MEX)

Touching the life we can build and transform together and with others, revitalizes our hearts and impels us to continue discovering and manifesting the love of the Heart of Jesus in our daily lives.

## Becoming the New Province of CEU/ENW/IRS/MAL

Since the meeting in Malaga, we have worked on several initiatives in our proposed new province:

- We have had monthly meetings of the leadership groups of CEU/ENW/IRS/MAL;
- We have had regular meetings of the provincial and canonical leaders of CEU/ENW/IRS;
- We have created a networking group drawn from the four parts of the proposed new province – Erika Tornya (CEU), Ilse Marie Weiffen (CEU), Mariella Agius (MAL), Pat Egan (IRS), Christine Triay (IRS), Carol Condon (ENW), Sheila McNamara (ENW). Their mandate is to develop ways for people to get to know each other and our different realities.
- We started in March 2023 with two recorded Zoom meetings with short presentations: “Getting to know Ireland-Scotland and Malta” and “Getting to know Austria-Hungary-Germany and England-Wales”.
- We have made a decision to work closely on Provincial Chapter preparation, to use the same facilitator and to hold follow-up meetings with ex-officio and delegates.
- We have also made a decision to appoint a “transition” group to clarify the civic and legal implications of becoming a new province.

*The Provincial and Leadership Teams  
of CEU, ENW, IRS and MAL*

## A New Kind of Leadership Team in ANZ

Lynette Toohey has been named Provincial for ANZ Province for a third mandate, starting in February 2023. During her last mandate, Lynette formed a leadership team with two RSCJs and two lay women on her extended team, who shared a good level of responsibility and decision-making in accompanying the life and mission of the

province. For some time there has been a sense that ANZ needed to look beyond the province for team members that will take the province forward. Lynette wanted to bring fresh energy and new thinking to the provincial leadership team. She had several dialogues with different provincials to look for an RSCJ who could be part of the provincial

leadership team. Rita Pinto RSCJ from the Province of India generously discerned and accepted to form a team with Diana Hayes, Kathleen Muirhead, and Lynette as a Provincial in ANZ Province. Rita will move to ANZ after she fulfills her current commitments.



Lynette Toohey



Rita Pinto



Diana Hayes



Kathleen Muirhead





Edited by:

**Casa Generalizia**  
**Società del Sacro Cuore**  
Via Tarquinio Vipera 16  
00152 Roma