

LIFE

**Transformation is
ultimately a divine
mystery...**





"My presence in the world today causes a transformation everywhere when I live and work towards that." that was the hidden meaning of this symbol presented in 2019, GC and we have been living from that center for the past number of years. This meaning can be seen or visualized here.

Job 14:7 "At least there is hope for a tree: If it is cut down, it will sprout again, and its new shoots will not fail. This is my call... this is our call... to be a transforming presence everywhere!"



Transformation is ultimately a divine mystery that is made possible when we submit our lives to God...

In the Book of Revelation 21:5 He who was seated on the throne said, "**Behold, I am making all things new.**" These same words were reiterated by Pope Francis who shared from his reflections on the Covid 19 pandemic that the pandemic itself was "**a propitious time to find the courage for a new imagination of the possible, with the realism that only the Gospel can offer us.**"¹

Our General Chapter Message, 2019 invited us also to engage in a new imagination of the possible and as we read and reflect on the stories and experiences of each province, we get an insight into what this has meant.

The image on the cover of this year's LIFE magazine depicts our world still in a flow of life, inviting us to be a transforming presence in the world today, where we live and work towards that...where new life emerges from what looks like an impossible dead bark of tree yet made possible when held in the secure and reassuring hands of God... Our acceptance of the invitation to become catalyses of change stems from being rooted in Christ... "**from whom comes our help and salvation.**" Psalm 121:1.

¹ Vida Nueva, April 18-24, 2020, 8-11

“Woman, who are you looking for?”^(Gv 20:15) The questions that can transform us...



Dearest Sisters,

It was precious and enriching for me to dedicate time to reading and reflecting on your articles regarding the processes that have taken place in your Provinces in recent years. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your commitment and your testimony!

From each Province emerges a personal path of research in making the content of the Message of the 2019 General Chapter alive and current in the cultural, political and social context of its own country and its own reality; at the same time there is also an urgent need for a *journey towards a future to be built together as a Congregation with a profound spiritual and synodal discernment of the signs of the times.*

Our Religious Family is truly experiencing a process of transformation generated by a world that has changed and by a Congregational reality that is very different from the past, in terms of numbers, average age, cultures and type of generations! This must not scare us but rather must generate in us a strong desire to safeguard and to make fruitful use *of the precious treasure of the charism* that has been entrusted to us and which can still offer new and bold responses to the needs of this time.

We are called to experience a human and spiritual transformation at a profound level if we do not want to give up the mission of evangelization entrusted to us by our Founders! We are not called to let ourselves be transformed by something we don't know and without knowing the motivation! Rather, we must have an ever clearer and more rooted understanding as to *why* we must be transformed and *what type* of transformation we are called to live and bring, so as not to give life to superficial changes that are incapable of making the difference desired by the Gospel.

All of Sacred Scripture speaks of processes of transformation, a transformation made possible thanks to the docility of people in opening their hearts to God in the concreteness of history, within human vulnerability and fragility.

I would like to focus with you in a particular way on the transformation of the disciples and women in their experience of following Jesus. A transformation that I see between two questions: the question addressed to the first disciples,



"WHAT are you looking for?" (Jn 1:38)

and the question addressed to Mary Magdalene on the morning of the Resurrection,

"Woman, who are you looking for?" (Jn 20:15)

True transformation is truly a shift from seeking “*Something*” to seeking “*Someone*.” It is the transformation that occurred in those who followed Jesus during his earthly mission. The disciples went *from* seeking security, advantages, popularity, seeking glory, next to Jesus *to*

seeking Jesus Christ, dead and risen, whose words made their hearts burn, making them courageous announcers of the Gospel with the strength and consolation of the Holy Spirit in the midst of persecution and at the risk of losing their own lives.

We too are called to live the same transformation every day: *from ardently seeking activities*, numbers, energy, success, security, presence (innate and good desires present within us but not sufficient) *to seeking Jesus*, dead and risen, present in our history, to have His same feelings in us (see Phil 2,1 ff) and announce it with passion within our ministries.

It is this passionate search for God and His presence within our life, the life of the Congregation and of humanity, which transforms us because it asks us every day to recognize what blocks us internally from conforming to the mentality of the Gospel, not for ourselves but for a world that is anxiously waiting for liberation, for hope that does not disappoint, for the true meaning of life, as John Paul II said to young people in the Jubilee of 2000:



It is Jesus in fact that you seek when you dream of happiness; He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you...it is He who urges you to shed the masks of a false life. It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives...the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal.²

The Church is also following and generating a path of transformation thanks to the reflection on synodality and its implementation. It is an ecclesial journey whose aim is the mission of evangelization in today's world. As never before, has a materialistic mentality, political and religious fundamentalism and economic business affected the values of the Christian faith. We are called to seek together as a Congregation and as members of the Church the most authentic ways to bring inspiration and healing through the Good News offered by the Gospel. This Good News always has at its centre the life, dignity and beauty present in the heart of every person.

Let us therefore allow ourselves to be transformed by God to be passionate announcers of his Word and of his Love, where we are and with what we are... It is not easy but it is what gives value and meaning to our life and mission.

Dear Sisters, I am on a journey with you in seeking, welcoming and announcing Jesus, dead and risen, to this wounded humanity that awaits...Here...Now

Dr. Dolma

Congregational Leader



The photos were taken by me during the Visitation of the Northern Indian Province

² Pope John Paull II. Tor Vergata, Saturday, 19 August 2000

Emergence of New Life

‘Common heart - Common journey’

Implementation of our General Chapter Message 2019 in the hearts, minds, and souls of each sister...

- Page 7 “Truly, truly, I say to you... ^{John 12:24}
- Page 10 Empowering Leadership at every stage of life
- Page 13 The Mission has no age...
- Page 16 Living fully the present moment - let us be light for one another.
- Page 19 True Leadership inspires and uplifts others.
- Page 21 Transformation begins with PERSONAL CHOICE...
- Page 24 Being Transforming Presence in Our Context Today
- Page 26 Servant Leaders promote life in every area of mission.
- Page 28 TRANSFORMATION is a JOURNEY, not a DESTINATION.
- Page 31 Being signs of HOPE among the people.
- Page 34 Moving Out to Others
- Page 37 Discerning Leadership - A generative outlook towards a new future
- Page 40 Common Mission - Common Journey - Together to Form and Transform Society
- Page 43 Keys to a Transforming Presence - Community - Participation - Community
- Page 46 A message from CLT

*“A reform must first transform the interior.
and then unfold from the inside out.”*

Father Theodosius



If you have faith the size of a mustard seed you can move mountains. Matthew 17:20



A Word of sincere gratitude:

Translators: Sr. Antje Eichhorn OSB (German), Ms. Daniella Persia (French), and (Italian) and Sr Matilde Inostroza (Spanish)

Editors & proof readers: Ms. Mary Mc Cann, Sr Fatima Puthenthoppil and Sr. Bernadette Duffy, Design and Typist

The Congregational Leadership Team are deeply grateful to all the provinces who have collectively shared their journey of transformation with our readers.

We feel indebted for your generosity and openness. We remain committed to keeping you in our daily thoughts and prayers.

"Truly, truly, I say to you: if the grain of wheat does not fall into the ground and die, it remains a single grain. But if it dies, it bears much fruit." John 12:24



Our life in the Swiss province has become a constant process of change where external circumstances force us to do things differently. Our growing smaller and older necessitates the closure of houses, demands unexpected restraints for the sisters and calls for a great willingness to let go of what we have grown fond of. A new form of poverty is being experienced, not a material poverty, but a change process deep within each individual sister that has the potential to transform her and those around her, as well as our entire province. As we can no longer do everything by ourselves, we employ lay people who can carry out many of our tasks and take on responsibilities, albeit differently from what we are used to. This necessary change is a source of pain for many of us and it takes time to accept this new way of life.

Transformation at the level of the provincial leadership

As a result of the new structures, the work of the provincial leadership has also changed. Good consensual collaboration becomes a priority as we work with the Board of Directors of the Association, with the cadres of the various areas led by lay people and with the community leaders. The latter, particularly needs to be supported, and accompanied in these difficult times of change.

In this situation, the task of the provincial leadership is also reflected in the common search for new and viable ways in which our charism, our values and the spirit of Mother Bernarda come to fruition.

To this end, the provincial leadership, together with the cadre, has developed a mission statement for the laity, through which our many employees learn what is important to us sisters, deal with it and learn to implement our values in their work. We are all challenged, lay people and sisters. Mutual understanding and goodwill are required.

The changes forecasted above engage us in different and new ways. We would like to share with you what this engages us with in a practical way and what has emerged over the past few years.

Meeting the younger sisters...

Now that we are fewer sisters it has become more important for us to know each other and to shape the necessary change processes together. Being fewer in number is compounded by the reality that the younger sisters are living and working in communities in three different language regions and usually only meet at Chapters. In the light of our reality, Sr Ursula Wyss, started inviting the "younger" sisters to regular weekend meetings. This allows us to experience togetherness in our diversity. We always meet at one of our workplaces and this enables us to spend quality time together, where we listen to each other, discuss pertinent topics, ask questions and in this way learn from each other. We also pray together and enjoy a meal. Through our encounters we are growing to appreciate that community living is an ongoing process that never 'finishes' but rather continues to evolve.

The sisters at the **retreat house in Höngen** accept the concept 'Transforming Presence' as a call to be present in the here and now and believe in this life changing force. They say:

"Our life in community and mission has not changed outwardly but we live with the people who seek silence, contemplation, prayer, desire for a life reorientation, day after day and we let ourselves be challenged by their searching."

The "Transforming Presence" process of change, as a reality has shaped and strengthened our consciousness and our faith. This is visible in how the Word of God, which we entrust to others has a changing power. Asking people to remain silent, for a longer period, and "taking them along" and discovering the treasure of life has a great effect. The way in which we live our daily availability and devotion is witness, has the character of witness,

and is perceived as witness, and motivates people to follow this trail as well, in their own way. The "leaven of God" and our presence in the here and now bears fruit or lack of fruit when we do not give ourselves. We experience 'Transforming Presence' in our work, when we enter its flow, it releases energy and makes us alive. It shapes our inner selves, our consciousness, our faith which forms a connection with the community.

For the sisters in **Fribourg** their living out the call to be a 'Transforming Presence' can be summarised in three concrete steps, namely, **Listening – Presence - Welcome**.

LISTENING - Hearing the Word of God through sharing the Gospel.

PRESENCE - To live intensely in the present moment and to be rooted in Christ. This engages us in various pastoral ministries as we serve in two nursing homes, as lectors and Eucharistic ministers in the parish. We also participate in the parish's offerings: conferences, prayer times, Lenten soup kitchens, parish meetings, to mention only a few.

WELCOME – To welcome the people we meet every day with openness particularly the homeless by offering them a voucher for accommodation, food and laundry offered by the city's municipality.



In the Maria vom Berg community being a 'Transforming Presence' means daily meeting for prayer in their chapel. They say; *'Here we are especially connected with God and with each other while we commemorate the needs of our time at home and worldwide.'*

The sisters from Carmelo Santa Teresa Brione community express their way of living Rooted in Christ as immersed daily in the human reality of their context of being a **'transforming presence'**, is how they seek to live and bring to life as elderly sisters an openness to welcome other elderly people in need of help. This is what they have to say personally;

"The motto of the General Chapter <<to be a transforming presence>> accompanies me in my daily life in the service of my sick sisters." Sr. Maria Luigina

"Everyday life forces me to change and to accept new, unknown, uncomfortable things... to transform my way of thinking to make room for life, for those who will come after us, for the spread of the Kingdom of God." Sr. Maria Emmanuela

"When I arrived in this community, I suddenly found myself in a new reality. I never imagined that I would be able to carry out a service of concrete help to my elderly sisters, to help them in their basic needs, to dedicate time to them, this requires me to be constantly adapting and transforming." Sr. Egidia

"For me too, helping my sisters and guests, understanding their interests to make them still lively and active is a transformation that has helped me first of all to return to myself and to be open to them. It makes me happy to see them rejoice." Sr. Paola

"A transforming presence for me is to put myself at the service of my sisters every day and to take care of interpersonal relationships with closeness and understanding, especially with the most fragile and sick. I am helped and sustained by community prayer, the Word of God, and Holy Mass." Sr. Flaviana

"Being a transforming presence in this new context of life was both very difficult and vital for me. In this large community, made up mainly of sisters and very elderly people, it was a challenge but also an opportunity. It opened up new horizons of life that I had never thought of. Firstly, I discovered in community it is possible to bring new life even where it seems that it is no longer possible. Secondly, I identified new areas of pastoral service in the parish. Working in these two areas, which are very different from each other: the elderly and the young, requires continuous adaptation and transformation, because each one in his or her own way is waiting to receive new life, and it is there that I try to make the Kingdom of God grow. Sr. Franca



Sr Elsbeth Ammann reminds us that all this is lived in a spirit of celebration and togetherness as she shares; "On the 13th of December, 2023, the 160th anniversary of Mother Bernarda's death, sisters from all over the Swiss province gathered for a service in the Motherhouse Church. Afterwards we enjoyed the sisterly get-together in our Maria vom Berg community. Here, we tried to align ourselves once again to her spirit: 'to her unshakable trust in God, her search for God's will and her exemplary charity.' Specifically, each sister asked herself:

What would Mother Bernarda do today if she were in my place? and we take this motivation with us and try to give our personal answer to it daily despite our limitations."

The continued search to answer this soul-searching question is often expressed by our sisters who now live in **St Franziskus** Care Home and are dependent on the help of lay staff due to growing needs. The everyday life of the elderly sisters is often very difficult due to health impairments and they often ask questions such as;

- "What else can I do for the people and the apostolate with my decreasing strength?"
- What else can I do amid my pain?
- What is the meaning of my sufferings?"

In conclusion we the sisters in the Swiss province present our symbol of living the Chapter Message, 2019 collectively as catalysts of 'Transforming Presence' in the words:

Being present in the here and now
 listening to the Word of God
 in our devotion
 to walk the path in mutual support
 and so let us change.



Swiss province...

Empowering Leadership at every stage of life

1. Leadership from the Perspective of Transformation



We enable sisters to take on leadership: The community in the provincial house is divided into different groups, which are each led by a sister who is responsible for her group.

The groups organize weekly meetings to share about faith and for recreation. There are regular meetings of the group leaders and the provincial leader or her assistant.



We empower laypeople to take on leadership.



In the provincial house, employees take on responsibility at the level of middle management (e.g. housekeeping management, kitchen management, St. Maria ward management/nursing ward).

There are monthly meetings with all heads of department. Likewise, there are training courses. We developed a common mission statement together with a team of nurses.

We encourage sisters to get involved and share responsibility in the parishes in which they live. For example, here in her parish, Sr. Annette is involved in the team preparing divine services for families and children.



A local leader accompanied the start of the new community in Eging (2 sisters). During regular meetings, they developed a *participatory community model*.

In practice we call the local leaders those responsible for the community.

2. Training for Transformation

We create spaces for young people in which they can encounter God. *Vocational pastoral activities*



We engage in *sharing about faith* with young people. With us, the Sisters of the Holy Cross, they can deepen the *Paschal Mystery*, a central reality of faith.



We celebrate worship services with young people and support them so that they can walk together in faith. Our outreach program includes activities for candidates for Confirmation and with children who will make their first Holy Communion.

Our religious formation is part of a rich network with other congregations. Both the formators and the novices and young sisters are regularly in contact with each other. In the photo you see Dr. Franz Haringer, head of the department for religious within the Diocese of Passau, together with our Holy Cross novices and with novices from other communities and cultures, as well as some of their formators. They are learning from one another and with each other. This network is proving to be very beneficial.

Ongoing formation for the sisters in all phases of life: Every year all the sisters in the province meet for spiritual community days. In recent years we have worked on the following topics: non-violent communication/appreciative dialogue, religious obedience in the context of human rights/human dignity; i.e. mindful interaction in the context of our charism. During these days, the sisters of the province appreciate the input, the mutual exchange and the encounters with one another.



3. Identity and Mission as Sisters of the Holy Cross

Jesus Christ crucified and risen is the centre of our spirituality. Our mission focuses on human dignity and the promotion of life at all levels.



A personal example to show how the *Paschal Mystery* is alive in our sisters and to what degree their *missionary impetus* is strong: 97-year-old Sr. Magda Maria still meets weekly, to share about faith issues, with a woman who is searching to deepen her faith, she prays with her companions and invites them to come to the communion service. Here in the picture, you see her celebrating the jubilee of 70 years as Sister of the Holy Cross. She is just one example, representative of many of our sisters. When the infirmities of old age prevent us from actively reaching out to people, prayer becomes our most important mission.



Prayer as a mission: In our common prayer and especially in adoration, we bring before God our world, the people of our time, our Church and all the concerns that have been confided to us. Our older sisters are particularly happy when they can pray specifically for one person or for the needs of the time. In the nursing department, daily rosaries are prayed for current concerns.



We offer a spiritual space to people who are seeking God and want to deepen their spiritual life. Spiritually-seeking (young) women are given the opportunity to live together with us. A new Form in this respect is the so-called year within a religious order: It gives an orientation to people who would like to deepen their faith. From November 2023 to June 2024, Ms. H., a retired teacher, is living in the community of the provincial house in Altötting. She takes part in our prayer and meals, and she works at the convent gate and in the laundry. She is also involved in some additional offers of care in the nursing department.



Several sisters provide spiritual guidance, offer retreats, or organize meetings in the parishes for retreats in Daily Life. Women interested in our spirituality have a monthly meeting in the Bernarda Circle, either online or in person. Our young sisters work on forming the faith of children and young people in nursery schools and in religious education. In this way, a transformation process is initiated in the children and young people, which makes them aware of their mission

THE MISSION HAS NO AGE

Is it still possible, in a small 'retirement' community to live the beauty of so many years of life and still be on mission?

Talking about beauty in a small group of people where there are health problems and various ailments due to advancing age may seem out of place, perhaps inappropriate, yet I am sure that each of us has something beautiful, something that cannot be renounced, because it enriches us.



Nature with its landscapes and its sunsets, as a work of art often moves us and touches us deeply, because beauty touches something hidden and immaterial that is part of us, that goes deep and reaches our emotions.

It is the capacity of inner feeling that allows us to grasp what lies deep inside of us and that makes us say: How beautiful! Even in the face of situations that may seem heavy from a human point of view. I am reminded of what Etty Hillesum used to say when she saw barbed wire and death

in front of her: *"But what do you think, that I don't see the barbed wire, I don't see the dominion of death, yes but I also see a slice of sky, and I have this slice of sky in my heart, and in this slice of sky that I have in my heart I see freedom and beauty."*³ Beauty is profound, if seen with the eyes of the Spirit. It is the smile of God. Looking at and seeing our sisters and brothers with the eyes of the heart, with the eyes of God, disposes us to allow ourselves to be transformed by Him.

We are a small group in Sondrio and the surrounding area. We have eighteen sisters in two communities in Sondrio and Ponte in Valtellina, a sister in an area of Sondrio *at the service of the parish*, and a sister in Milan, a nurse, who works in the area where she lives taking care of the elderly, lonely and sick.

Our presence, now more than ever, is highly significant. In a fairly large territory we are the only sisters present; The "young" sister is fifty-nine years old, the others, we are from seventy seven years old up to ninety two. Five sisters are ailing, but in full activity, because with prayer they support the sisters who work in the city and in nearby villages, some in Christian initiation, some for the catechesis of adults, some as ministers of communion and spiritual animators appointed by the parishes where they live.

I asked some of them how they live **the beauty of so many years of life in the** community of elderly sisters in retirement and these are the answers:

"I feel at home here, as a Holy Cross Sister, for example, in the mutual concern of a sister, in prayer, in mutual forgiveness, in gratitude for all that we receive,



³ Etty Hillesum (1914 – 1943)

in the offering of our fragility. Prayer (not prayers), where there is room for missionary spirit, prolonged listening to the Word, adoration, silence, mutual care, essentiality and the witness of sisters older than me, who allow themselves to be shaped by the wisdom of the Cross from which, even in suffering, the joy of a life sustained by faith and nourished by our spirituality shines through."

"Every day I renew my 'Here I am', I renew the response to His call, giving more time to prayer and contemplation. I am also grateful for everything I receive from the community, which I feel is my family."

"I try to praise the Lord for this new phase of my life that allows me to cultivate and enjoy a deeper union with Him... and with the sisters whom I am happy to love, with my poverty and theirs."

"Having lived religious life for so many years, it is true, the Lord has shaped us and has given us the freedom to be able to choose... but sometimes it is a struggle; I realize that I have a lot of good intentions but I don't always put them into practice... Sometimes I wish I was a few years younger."

"Now in my community of elderly and retired sisters, I live with serenity, gratitude and joy, remembering all that my long life has offered me in the service of the sick and living in community"



We also talked about **our mission** and the following experiences emerged:

"I am always on mission, so I thank the Lord for this. I live it in prayer, in mutual acceptance and also in mutual help when it is needed. I pray for peace, for the Church and for the whole world; I accept what life gives me."

"I feel part of the great mission of the Church on a journey of synodality, of hope despite the darkness of history and then, specifically, in three areas: availability and collaboration in the community; in a nursing home as a minister of communion and for spiritual animation once a week; in catechesis in a village just outside Sondrio in collaboration with a catechist of the parish."

"I am on mission as a Christian. The how is not important; what matters is the heart that tells me to choose every day a life as similar as possible to that of Jesus."

"You can always be on a mission even in the shadows and in hiding."

"I feel this time I am on a world mission where prayer knows no boundaries. I also live the mission through meetings with the people who come to visit me and telephone communications, which for me are like fruitful works of mercy. By living together our community life with everything we do: prayer, renunciation, sacrifices, attention... it becomes stronger and stronger, more resistant, more effective, so as Sisters of the Holy Cross we move forward with hope."

"The mission is for me being with others and for others. I am part of the city's group of volunteers, my activity is working at the soup kitchen, volunteering in a nursing home which means praying, listening and accompanying the lonely, with simplicity and love. I am also part of the Renewal of the Spirit group. Prayer, God's Word, and worship have sustained me through my difficulties. I am also present in the hospital chapel when Holy Mass is celebrated and prayers are offered for the doctors, for all the hospital staff and for all the sick in the facility. Every evening I thank the Lord for having met Him in so many people."

At home, we work to prepare blankets, sweaters and whatever may be needed for the newborns that the pro-life center offers to needy and expectant mothers.

We are also present in two diocesan commissions: that of catechesis and that of the biblical apostolate, for the formation of catechists and teachers of religion in schools. In addition, a sister is present on social media where she offers commentary on the Word of God.

Last but not least, we asked ourselves how we **live together the Mission** entrusted to us by the Lord:

"Here we go. It is the only Holy Cross community in the area. A mission made up of presence, partly hidden, but not ineffective. We are there for one another in co-responsibility, to look towards the same goal: the Paschal Mystery. And living this in fraternal relationships is a daily journey, often an uphill road, but one that also allows us to glimpse concretely the beauty and joy of living together when we are able to go 'beyond ourselves' with the help and grace of God."

"We seek to support each other, we take an interest in the problems of the Church and of humanity in order to share in the crosses, the successes, the tragedies that we present to the Lord in prayer and in the offering of ourselves with Him, in Him and for Him."

"Relationships are good; By talking to each other, intentions and misunderstandings can be clarified"

As a community, we are part of the parish prayer group to which more than one hundred and seventy people have joined, at the invitation of the parish priest, with the aim of praying according to the pastoral needs of the parish. We have prayed, for more than a year, to open the 'Sycamore' experience in Sondrio for young people in search of a vocation. For one week each month they live together with a family. They also have the support of a priest who looks after them after school. We have given the availability of a floor of our house to accommodate them. Now as a group we are praying that this experience can also be offered to the girls.

It is no coincidence that this morning, in the prayer of praise with Psalm 107, we prayed:

"With you we will do great things..." which we do not know, He alone knows! But we believe in it.

We feel that we are on a journey to open ourselves to the light and be enlightened, in this way we will be a little transformed every day. As a community, we have many frailties and limitations, but we know that the more limits there are, the more the Lord is present, so with Mary we sing the Magnificat every day because as Fr. Mazzi says in one of his articles:

"We can become old and think that time is not made to grow old but to make us understand that maturing requires transforming the temporal passages into Spring Seasons!"

So, take heart!

'You must be the change you wish to see in the world.' M. Gandhi



House Italy

Living fully the present moment

Let us be light for one another...

The Tree of Life – The Cross – symbolize our rootedness in Christ, in meeting the challenges of today's world.

We are people of Hope, and through our transforming presence, we try to bring new life.

The Circle symbolizes that as Sisters of the Holy Cross we are united in our Charism.

LEADERSHIP FOR TRANSFORMATION

Our journey towards a new form of Governance began in 2009. We researched and evaluated many possible ways forward. We chose a Covenant relationship, which has a scriptural basis in the book of Exodus.⁴ 'Covenant is the most frequently used metaphor for describing Israel's relationship with God. There are two parties to the Covenant. The metaphor describes the structural relationship of the Sisters of the Holy Cross in England with the Holy Cross Congregational Leadership.'⁵

The Covenant Leader is a Holy Cross Sister, from another Province, who is appointed by the Congregational Leadership. She participates at congregational meetings and Assemblies of England. One of the sisters in England was appointed leader of the sisters in England by the Congregational Leadership. She is supported by two councilors,' who are elected by the sisters in England.

This new form of Leadership came into effect on 1st January 2023 and is an on-going process.

FORMATION FOR TRANSFORMATION



Sisters on pilgrimage to the tomb of St Alban

There are several opportunities we have had since the General Chapter 2019, to develop our formation:

Global Caring – Laudato Si. We have had input, time for sharing and discussions on many aspects associated with climate change, sustainability, leading to practical applications and a change in lifestyle.

Synodality – We contributed to Parish and Religious sessions on the three Synod themes of Communion, Participation and Mission.

One of the effects of the pandemic was how we learnt to use Zoom, and could attend webinars, on spirituality and a range of issues. It enabled us to communicate with our sisters around the world, especially in sessions to celebrate the anniversary of Mother Bernarda. We were enriched by being able to join in talks given by resource people during the Council of the Congregation. We have been creative by organizing journeying together to places of pilgrimage, days of spiritual sharing (reflection and relaxation), reading books and discussing them.

⁴ Exodus 20:1ff

⁵ Holy Cross Sisters England Covenant Structure Statutes



OUR IDENTITY AND MISSION AS HOLY CROSS SISTERS

The sisters in England are currently engaged in various forms of ministry: education, parish and social.

What follows is a synopsis of these kinds of engagement:

On Saturday 24 February 2024⁶ Pope Francis reminded Spanish Catholic educators that the Church is called to promote an inclusive education, where all students can unleash their potential regardless of the background, recalling that this has always been an essential part of its educational mission. ***“Education is, above all, an act of hope in those before us (...), in their possibilities to change and contribute to the renewal of society,”*** said Pope Francis.

Research published in 2023⁷ has shown that for a substantial number of secondary school pupils in London the Catholic School is currently the sole experience of the Catholic Church they have or will have. The head-teacher of Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School in London, where one sister teaches, acknowledged at a recent staff-conference that a high percentage of pupils in this Catholic School do not go to Mass on Sundays. Furthermore, an increasing number of young people are deeply anxious. They are asking, "what is life all about, and why they are here on earth". What follows is an account, found in the same school, of a pupil's loss of belief in the existence of God, along with a development.

It is of a seventeen-year-old girl pupil whose mother revealed to the sister that her daughter had re-found her Christian Faith as a result of her teaching. Henceforth, this young woman is included in the sister's daily prayers. This is the kind of experience which fills us with hope.



The sisters in North London are both members of their Justice and Peace Group, through which they attend a monthly vigil outside the Home Office in central London praying for a change of heart in our government regarding asylum seekers who cross the channel in small boats.

Sisters who are retired from paid work now volunteer with those who are in most need, offering education for refugees, support for vulnerable women, parish ministry to priests working alone, and visiting the infirm.

Sr Bernadette praying outside the Home Office in London, for a change of heart in our government regarding Asylum seekers.



Here are a few examples of the sister's ministry:

One sister volunteers each week in a project in London for vulnerable and abused women, many of whom are in prostitution.

One is the 'listening ear' to pupils who have problems, helping them to resolve their differences and challenges, and so preventing these from escalating.

⁶ Vatican News 24 February 2024. Pope Francis addresses Spanish Educators in Madrid.

⁷ The Centre for Catholic Education, Research and Religious Literacy. St Mary's University, Twickenham, London.

A sister volunteers at a charity, teaching girls who have recently arrived in the country but unfortunately are unable to find a suitable school.

Working in these contexts confronts us with the basic realities of life and gives us valuable insight into our own vulnerability which fills us with gratitude for the many blessings we have ourselves. This is truly transforming.

In addition, a sister leads a weekly group for sharing and discussion where often current issues are brought to prayer which brings hope and courage. It is open to all faiths, and those who are just searching for something deeper in life.

Another sister engages frequently with local beekeepers, as she herself keeps bees and trains others to do so. A nutritious supply of honey is harvested from her bees. Sister enjoys sharing her produce near and far. She also enjoys using the beeswax to create candles as gifts.

Sisters are involved in the governance of Catholic Schools, guiding the strategic direction, and supporting the Holy Cross Charism and spirituality.

The sisters in England take an active part as members of their local parishes as Catechists, Ministers of the Eucharist and Readers. They also arrange flowers and are involved in church music and by leading Scripture Studies they enrich the spiritual life of their Parish.

All sisters try to be a transforming presence where they are, and to whoever they meet, witnessing to the mystery of the Cross and bringing hope. Our elderly sisters have an hour's adoration each week praying for those in active ministry. Despite their limitations and growing frailty, they witness by the love and care they give to those around them.

*"Let us be light for one another
and not lose heart.
We are made for these times!"
Clarissa Pinkola Estes*

These sisters are truly rooted in Christ and nourished by a life of prayer.

Sisters sharing life at the
Grange.

England



True Leadership inspires and uplifts others

Leadership for Transformation:

In the Sri Lankan province, we are one hundred and fifteen sisters. Our transformative leadership is rooted in Christ through our spiritual journey with the Lord. Our vision for the sisters is to become more spiritual, committed Holy Cross Sisters, and to find a new creative interest in bringing Christ to people.



We accompany the sisters through transformative leadership to strengthen their vocation, community life, and mission. We provide comprehensive support by implementing diverse methods, such as assemblies, retreats, personal meetings, and group gatherings (during Advent, Lent, and the Holy Cross Feast). We also hold meetings with different groups (hospital teams, pastoral care vocation teams, formation teams, finance teams, and youth) to guide sisters towards a comprehensive approach to leadership development.

We strive to form future leaders. Some sisters have already completed a one-year leadership program. We offer leadership programs to sisters and community leaders to foster a greater commitment to building future leaders within the province. Through congregational collaboration for mission, meetings, and spiritual inputs, sisters become more creative, willing to learn, and share their potential for the mission.

Formation for Transformation:

We are encouraged by our commitment to continual improvement in the formation process. It is commendable that formators are taking more initiative and enthusiasm to form those undergoing formation with maximum effort.

The formators work as a team, helping, supporting, and strengthening one another by sharing their experiences. They receive twice-yearly input from resource persons and meet with the Provincial Leadership Team to improve their formation methods. This includes before working with those being formed, formators identify their own strengths, weaknesses, and potential blind spots through self-reflection. In this way we provide transformative formation that is a continuous process of life, from pastoral care of vocations to gracefully growing old.

As a Team:



The pastoral care of the mission is carried out collaboratively in parishes, schools, and mission areas. We are encouraged to see that all those who have joined our province to become sisters since 2019 have remained with us and currently, we have two novices and two postulants. In addition to this, we have three pre-postulants and fifteen young women who are attending school while residing in different communities with the intention of joining us.

Our Identity and Mission as Holy Cross Sisters:

Includes medical care, pastoral care, and education.

These past years as Sisters of the Holy Cross have been a testament to the transformative power of faith, akin to the slow and steady transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly. We entered, like caterpillars, with a strong foundation – the call to serve God and a promising faith. Yet, we were bound by earthly concerns, limited in our ability to take flight.

Through the guidance of our chapter and the unwavering support of our community, we continue to be transformed. Prayer became our nest, a place of quiet reflection where we shed worldly distractions and emerged with a deeper connection to the Lord. Like the caterpillar consuming leaves, we devoured scripture and the wisdom of our sisters, allowing their knowledge to fuel our own growth.

As we continued this path, acts of service became the threads from which we knitted our wings. Helping those in need was not just a duty, but an opportunity to spread our wings and take flight, carrying the message of God's love to those who needed it most through our ministry. With each act of service, our faith strengthened, and our wings grew more vibrant.

We take much initiative to inspire sisters not to be earthbound people like caterpillars, but sisters with wings, ready to soar to new heights in our commitment to God and our transformative leadership within the Holy Cross community. We understand that true leadership is not about power, but about inspiring and uplifting others, just as our Chapter Message has inspired us. Like butterflies flitting from flower to flower, we will carry the message of faith, hope, and transformative love throughout the world.



Sri Lankan Province



Transformation begins with PERSONAL CHOICE...

As we reflect on the process of transformation in the light of the General Chapter Message, 2019 the process of how recycling takes place emerged as a symbol for us.

The process of recycling begins by PERSONAL CHOICE. Instead of throwing away in the garbage bin certain used and unwanted products we have decided to set them aside for recycling. Through the long process of recycling the waste product must undergo extensive transformation even losing its original IDENTITY.

However, at the end from the discarded material a beautiful useful and new product emerges.



As a Province we paid much attention to implement the General Chapter message 2019 focusing on:

- Our identity and Mission as Holy Cross Sisters
- Transformation for Leadership
- Transformation for Formation

Vision

To motivate and empower individual sisters by giving them spiritual and professional education to become a transforming presence in the province and in society.

Our Identity and Mission as Holy Cross Sisters

As Holy Cross Sisters we value and live the legacy our Founder Mother Bernarda and our pioneer sisters who lived and handed on to us to impart life to those searching for meaning through the Spirit of Jesus.

The areas we focused on to root our identity as Holy Cross Sisters are:

- Study of the life history of Mother Bernarda and Father Theodosius.
- Conducted various programs focusing on the “founding event”
- Study of the Constitution and Statutes and its interpretations for today
- Bible classes to motivate everyone to proclaim the Good News effectively
- Reading the life history of our pioneer sisters to imbibe the spirit of our pioneers.

Living the mission - Home for the victims of POSCO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences)

In collaboration with the government, we run three houses for girls who are caught in POSCO cases and offers them security. One for girls below eighteen years of age and another for young women eighteen plus years of age. We



also take care of girls below eighteen years of age who are mentally affected due to the trauma of sexual abuse. We provide these girls with psychological assistance by counselling, assisting, and preparing them for their legal cases and give them facilities to continue their education and find suitable employment. We also give moral support to the families of these victims.

Skill Training

To continue the ministry of empowering the young women in the villages, we conduct advanced courses in cutting, tailoring and embroidery with the support of 'Save a Family Organization.' We provide them with advanced training in the use of tailoring machines. We also collaborate with corporate companies to obtain suitable employment. Additionally, we train women to make rosaries so that they can earn a living.

Health Promotion in the village areas

We provided toilet facilities for one hundred families where people had to previously depend on the common toilet facilities.

Care of the Elderly



We give special attention to care for our elderly sisters. We value the contribution they made to the province, Church, and mission. In our society taking care of the elderly is a challenge since they are left alone in most of the families due to the migration of children and many other reasons. We have begun with "home mission" to reach out to such families and to help meet their needs. We imitate Jesus who reached out to the families and healed those who were sick.

Leadership for Transformation

The Provincial leadership always keeps in mind that each sister makes up the province. As St Paul writes to Timothy our hope is to fan into flame the gift of the spirit in each sister. Being aware of the lack of vocations we empower each individual sister to be deeply rooted in her religious vocation and to keep abreast of the latest developments in her professional field.

Our focus:

Spiritual renewal programs

Annual Retreats and spirituality courses are availed of to keep enthusiasm in religious life alive and to go deeper everyday into the mystery of the love of Jesus. Inspirational thoughts are being shared through the media to assist us daily.

Updating the knowledge of Church laws and government laws

Sisters are provided with all the opportunities to update their knowledge on all the areas which are necessary for life and mission.

Professional and technical updating

Most of us are engaged in the healing ministry and health care education. In the fast-changing world of today it is essential that our sisters keep themselves professionally updated for better service and to comply with the rules and regulations. So, we ensure that sisters are given opportunities for training and updating their skills so that they can be effective leaders.

Collaborative ministries

Since collaboration is one of the main focuses of GC message, we deliberately give importance to collaborative ministries: collaboration with other religious organizations in providing and receiving personnel for teaching and serving; free medical service to other congregations, those who are enclosed, priests, and especially to the elderly priests; we offer to government organizations medical service to ex-military persons and their families. In collaboration with the local church, directly and indirectly, we assist medically for the benefit of the poor and needy especially to those in coastal belts.

Lay leadership programs

We equip and engage lay people especially women for leadership. We provide professional, psychological, and spiritual updating to become good associates of our Holy Cross Family.

Formation for Transformation

The Lord has created human beings in His own image and likeness. He has given us the freedom to make choices that form us. We provide holistic formation to young women who seek to join us because they will become the future of the Congregation. Ongoing formation is given by providing spiritual, psychological, intellectual, motivational, religious and congregational renewal programmes to update the sisters and those who are directly involved with our life and ministries.



Jesus Youth activities

Our junior sisters are given the chance to take part in 'Jesus Youth Activities' an international Catholic movement so that they can help guide and direct the youth on their life journey.

Basic formation to domestic workers and migrant workers

Some of our sisters are directly involved in the caring and formation of vulnerable girls and women who are engaged in domestic work. Sisters support them in obtaining their just rights from their employers and the government. We gather them in groups and motivate them to uphold their dignity through various programs and educational activities.

Focus on mental health of individuals

The world is changing so fast and the increasing pressure on life is becoming a big threat. Mental health issues are a great challenge to our society. As a response to this threat, we have upgraded our mental health services to reach out to all affected, respecting individual dignity and privacy.

Conclusion

By focusing on living the General Chapter Message 2019, we had the opportunity and privilege to renew our religious life in all its aspects and to empower the sisters with the spirit of mission. As a province and as individuals we feel that we have returned to our roots, and to the missionary spirit of Mother Bernarda, focusing especially on women and children. Moreover, we also give much focus to collective leadership which unites us with the bond of sisterly love, family spirit and common mission.

South Indian province

BEING A TRANSFORMING PRESENCE IN OUR CONTEXT TODAY

“This is my call - this is our call, to be immersed in human reality and to be a transforming presence in our context today.” GC. 2019

As simple seeds of prayer lie buried in the soil of the will of God, so the diligent practice of contemplative prayer, contemplative dialogue, daily reading of Scripture, and internalization of the Word of God deepens our faith and commitment to attune ourselves with the plan of God. This deepening process inwardly helps us to grow and consequently we experience new life and bear fruit in our day-to-day living.



Through this process we can liken our lives to a tree that sheds its leaves in autumn and winter yet returns in spring to bring forth new life again. This cycle of dying and rising is central to the life of Jesus, the Paschal Mystery, who passed from death to life so that we might share in His new life forever. In the hope of this new life, we confidently trust in Divine Providence and let the Word

of God take root in our hearts. Through our submission and sharing in Jesus’ dying and rising we believe we will grow in strength in our own lives and share positively and creatively in the lives of other people around us bringing faith, hope, and love.

No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God (1Cor.2, 11)

From, 2019 to 2024 were challenging years for the mission of the Holy Cross Sisters of Central Indian Province. It was the period of the COVID-19 pandemic and post-pandemic. The communities through their efforts to keep the mission alive were ever alert, active and continuously seeking to discern the Spirit of the Lord at work among themselves and their colleagues, in their desire to constantly protect life and preserve it in the face of death that surrounded them. Embracing these life challenging experiences was a deeply transformative experience in the hearts and minds of all.

The General Chapter message 2019 was lived literally in the given context of answering the needs of the time and trusting in Divine Providence as religious women keeping hope alive in the face of hopelessness and a suffering humanity. We did this by using our talents and abilities to help mend broken hearts, upholding dignity, and good Christian values, through many different essential services.

FORMATION FOR TRANSFORMATION

The annual retreats, seminars, Biblical readings and reflections, other readings, messages from PLT and CLT, attending CRI local and regional meetings, and diocesan programs are helping us in our ongoing formation to remain connected to God and to His people.

Actively participating in the daily Holy Eucharist, Basic Christian Community prayers, visiting the families in our mission areas, talking to the people with whom we come in contact, etc. are helping us to transform and reconstruct our lives to be more relevant and effective in our personal and common life.

CARING FOR OUR COMMON HOME

To preserve and protect Mother Earth we plant fruit trees, medicinal plants, and flower gardens thus enabling our staff and students to do the same at home. We care for our Mother Earth, our Common Home.... through rainwater harvesting, production of biogas for cooking, utilizing solar energy, rearing cattle, allowing a green and clean bio-diversity, Dryland development, re-cycling the wastewater for cultivation and meticulously-planned cultivation, in season and out of season. As co-creators, we take care of Mother Earth by cultivating the land, making use of organic manure, and promoting a plastic-free garden.

PASTORAL MINISTRY

When there are death experiences, we hold fast to the Crucified and Risen Christ and experience the emergence of new life. In our mission, we develop continuous consciousness of the presence of God. The sisters are engaged in the wholistic formation of families through de-addiction, counseling, and spiritual renewal programs, Teaching catechism to the young, visiting the sick, visiting families, and praying with them.

TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY

All the sisters in communities are making efforts to be effective leaders in their given situation by keeping themselves informed with current social, political, and economic matters. We carry out our mission as one team along with our staff, sharing responsibilities. With deep trust in the Lord who called us to do His mission; we go forward with the challenges of life. We make use of all the given opportunities for our personal and spiritual growth by preserving the unity of the community encouraging and appreciating the talents and initiatives of one another.

We embrace all people and keep an open-door policy as we interact and keep a good rapport with our neighboring families, communities, and employees. We include them in the important celebrations of our community, thereby, instilling in them the importance of oneness leaving aside the differences of caste, creed and religion, and sharing the love of Christ.

TRANSFORMATIONAL BLESSINGS

The transformation we witness around us, in the villages and in the school where the sisters work can be encapsulated in the image of the butterfly as it grows from its cocoon stage of life to fullness of life as it spreads its wings. This can be seen in the renewal of family life where peace is restored and relationships amended, and where children show respect for their parents, learn discipline and morals, and participate in the Mass and prayers attentively.

It is only through love, care, concern, compassion, readiness to listen to others, and understanding that we can transform people and ourselves.

“You shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaves do not wither but whatever you do prospers” (Ps 1:3).

Central Indian Province



Servant Leaders promote life in every area of mission

LEADERSHIP FOR TRANSFORMATION.



We choose to be **Servant Leaders** focusing on meeting the needs of our sisters with a self-sacrificing mind as Jesus did. We desire to do our best not seeking appreciation and admiration instead seeking the glory of God. By accepting constructive criticism, we grow in maturity. The animators of the communities were given the opportunity to attend seminars and workshops to empower them to be effective leaders of the communities and institutions. We encourage and understand each other and bring out the potentials in each one for the mission. Building confidence and trust in others needs a lot of transparency and sincerity. Together we face the challenges life offers. We motivate and support our young community leaders and encourage them as we collaborate in building up the province.

Each day we learn something new from our own sisters, from nature, from our co-workers and from everyone we meet. Only a humble heart can receive the grace to grow towards holiness. Nature teaches us about humble beginnings.

FORMATION FOR TRANSFORMATION.

We can form others only if we are formed. It is a lifelong process always striving to imitate Christ to 'be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect' (Matthew 5:48). Accepting our unworthiness and frailty, we make efforts in forming the young generation leading by example.

Transformation takes place when we understand ourselves more fully. Young women in formation are given self-awareness meditations, feedback sessions, relaxation techniques and free time to explore and learn. Instead of admitting them in professional courses, our goal is to initiate them to religious life and its teachings. We envisage quality more than quantity. They need to be spiritually equipped to face the challenges. Our efforts are focused on a holistic approach that brings about continuous transformation of mind, heart and will. In the process of forming ourselves, sisters place great importance on reflecting on the Word of God. God speaks to us in the Scriptures. We believe in the joy of growing in holiness deeply rooted in the Word of God. Each sister is given the freedom to express their desire to spend time for their spiritual renewal. As we reflect on the contemplative dimension, some of our sisters were initiated into a new method of meditation called TAVAM (Penance). This is a guided meditation for ten hours per day in strict silence with bodily penance. This brought forth a lot of awareness, healing of mind and body and spiritual well-being of the sisters.



OUR IDENTITY AND MISSION AS HOLY CROSS SISTERS

In spite of difficulties and challenging situations, God still uses us as instruments to meet the demands of the time. Today we are in a very challenging political situation where minorities are deprived of their rights. We can face these challenges only with an unshakable trust in God amid these difficulties and uncertainties. We collaborate with different dioceses in providing quality education to the poor and marginalized children of the society. Mostly our presence is in remote villages where people have no access to good schools. We have reached out to the less privileged children through non formal education along with formal education with the intention of the transformation of the society in the long run.

In our efforts to live our Charism as Holy Cross Sisters, we show forth our relationship with God and others by being in solidarity with suffering humanity. The external challenges make us strong to remain united in prayer. Death and sickness are realities of life. Even during all these hardships, we celebrate life and thank God for every redemptive suffering. Trusting in God we walk in the footsteps of Mother Bernarda and pray that she may continue to inspire, lead, and strengthen us in these challenging times.

We consider the need for collaboration and networking in our ministries (e.g. HCM initiatives). The spiritual aspect of this collaboration is transforming oneself and others. The repeated coming together as one family fosters a sense of belongingness and journeying together.

Focusing on improving the quality of our healthcare, we worked towards accreditation programs. In the field of education, sisters qualify with the mandatory requirements and are equipped with new methods and technologies. Socio- pastoral workshops have helped the sisters to be knowledgeable and efficient advocators for the voiceless as they administer to the migrant population. This has a dual effect as it brings about remarkable change in those who receive and in those who serve.



Reaching out to those on the margins the North Indian province take initiatives to develop effective methods for inviting people to believe in Jesus Christ using digital means for the proclamation of the Gospel; such as developing online contents, videos, smartphone apps, using the medium of Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp, E-mails among many other methods! We continue our efforts to reach the people with our new digital initiatives to bring the message of salvation.

In this way we are called to partake in the mission of the proclamation of the kingdom of God using all the means available to us.

Today the needs of the time are to put on the armour of faith, to draw strength from our Loving Lord and work towards a transformed society.

"MAY JESUS LIVE IN OUR HEARTS." Mother Bernarda

North Indian Province



TRANSFORMATION is a JOURNEY, not a DESTINATION.

IDENTITY AND MISSION

As a province, we heeded the call 'to live the Paschal Mystery in the existential peripheries of our communities and society' and be a transforming presence. We had numerous opportunities to creatively interpret our identity for those who participated with us in mission, and live our identity as we engaged in the mission, confronted by experiences and challenges for growth, new life, and transformation.

Recognizing that our common identity and the effectiveness of communicating this to all is each one's responsibility, we embarked on a journey to transform our spiritual lives and community living, using the practical tools offered by our Provincial elective chapter. Not only were we transformed by the interactions within our communities, but also through the opportunities of forming lay people in our Spirituality and Charism. Through these encounters, we had the opportunity to reflect anew on our spirituality, charism, and implementation of our General Chapter message of 2019 through the eyes of our lay collaborators, making these relevant and meaningful to them.

Successful companies use branding to create awareness of who they are, and what they are offering to their customers. Our branded t-shirts, fabric, and jackets bearing our logo and General Chapter Message of 2019, were not just items of clothing or fashion, but instruments of teaching and communicating our identity and mission as Sisters of the Holy Cross. It became a visible reminder of what we were called to live, and an everyday clothing item was used to evangelize those around us, enabling the message of being a transforming presence to be understood and further communicated.

COVID-19 with its experience of lockdown, restrictions, illnesses, loss, and fear challenged us to live and communicate our identity more profoundly. We had to transform the negative narrative of "*COVID changed everything and robbed us of so much*" which spoke of hopelessness and despair to a narrative of hope, new opportunities, growth, and life. Sisters and lay collaborators working directly with people who have given up hope, and lost enthusiasm and energy for ministry and service, are continuing to empower, encourage, spend time with, and listen to people, facilitating transformation and new life, while at the same time being transformed themselves.

During our annual Holy Cross Education Conference, together with our lay school leadership, we reflected and shared our experiences of navigating the challenges imposed by the pandemic, using innovative and creative ways of carrying on the ministry of education and in this way continued to bring forth new life. We then celebrated our resilience with grateful and hopeful hearts, and finally this year, we shared how in our ministries we are "*Going deeper, Going together, Going beyond,*" by reflecting on the implementation of our Catholic Ethos and Holy Cross Spirituality, Charism and Identity in our schools.

The book, ***Rise up and Go, by Sr Maureen Rooney (2023)***, brought us in touch with our recent history and present realities. It also strengthens our identity and opens our new members to the depth of our legacy and tradition. It illustrates the current commitment of our Province and is an affirmation of the life and work of the province and each sister.

Fr Theodosius' words to the sisters, "Your convent is the world" applies equally to us today. We were called to use the influences and challenges of our modern society as instruments for evangelization. We could not remain cut off from society since developments, events, and even counterproductive developments impact us. Instead of despising these developments and influences, we used them in innovative and constructive ways to challenge the self-centred and unconstructive uses society had for them and remained relevant as a religious. Social media became platforms for evangelization, connection, sharing, vocation promotion, networking, and ministry enhancement and enrichment.

We have always been and still are very strong in mission and service. This remains a major way we express our identity. Despite our limitations and weaknesses, sisters and communities continue to make an impact through our numerous services and ministries within the Church, and the broader community, especially with the young, the marginalized, and the needy. All this brings life to the sisters and the people.

Since 2019, going beyond our limitations, and not becoming complacent in our existing, established ministries, we have bravely embraced risk and moved to the peripheries by establishing two new communities ministering to the marginalized, Makambe (Zimbabwe) and Okongo (Northern Namibia).

In Makambe with its rudimentary structures housing a primary school, secondary school, and clinic, the mere presence of the Holy Cross Sisters has

restored dignity, nurtured hope, and brought forth new life to an entire community of people. In Okongo, amidst shifting sands, dryness, and extreme heat, the seeds of a new school to specifically meet the educational needs of the extremely marginalized San people, have been established. These ventures have brought excitement and new life to the province... an assurance that we are still growing, still going deeper, still going beyond...



Our sisters working among the San People in Okongo, Namibia

LEADERSHIP FOR TRANSFORMATION



Sr. Phuthunywa Siyali with school leaders, Holy Cross Education Conference, 2024.

Leadership was at the heart of our transformation journey. During this time, we had two African Provincials that have helped us to reinforce our identity in Africa as Holy Cross Sisters; being Holy Cross Sisters in an African way. This was by no means absent before, but leadership by African women adds something very significant to rejoice about and take pride in. Between 2019 and 2024, there were two elective Chapters: the first in which Sr Monica Madyembwa was re-elected and the second at the beginning of 2023 during which Sr Phuthunywa Siyali was elected Provincial, which was particularly significant as being the first black South African to lead our Province.

We engaged in a participatory, collaborative, leadership process empowering and working alongside the laity who have taken over leadership roles in our institutions and projects. Together we have reflected on our spirituality, charism, and ethos and discerned ways of being more effective as leaders. This in turn empowers our staff, pupils, and others by delegating authority, encouraging responsibility, nurturing, and guiding others to realise their full potential, while never losing sight of the fact that we are all called to serve.

Leadership within the province at all levels worked at recognizing and using the skills and expertise that exist, equipping where this was needed to carry on our mission of bringing new life to all situations, contexts, ministries, and apostolates we are involved in.

FORMATION FOR TRANSFORMATION

Formation by its very nature is a journey, involving many twists and turns; however, it remains a supportive, facilitated, life-changing daily journey of self-discovery with no destination in sight. Accepting this leads to personal and communal transformation in our perception and image of God, and how we relate to God and others. No matter what stage we are at, we can never say that “we have arrived.” At every stage, we are confronted by an ever-changing society, necessitating continuous evaluation, adapting, and changing our methods of forming and being formed to meet the demands, influences, and challenges of our modern society and the world.

Considering the lifegiving, constructive evaluation, encouragement, suggestions, and concerns expressed about all stages of formation during our provincial elective chapter, we moved towards a more personalized way of engaging young women in formation. Our methods were intentional and experiential in helping them grow in maturity and learn the skills and knowledge needed to take their place in the community, in ministry, and on the peripheries of the province. Whilst these are being instilled, their relationship with the Lord in personal prayer and communion is emphasized.

The call to embrace the gift of transformation is our daily struggle. Journeying with, accompanying, or forming young women, we were being formed and challenged ourselves to reflect on whether we were mirroring what we expected of them, especially our temporary professed sisters. We were challenged to be authentic to our commitment to be a transforming presence; radiate the hope we so easily spoke about; update ourselves; be open to engaging in ongoing formation; take an interest in the growth of temporary professed sisters; constructively introduce young women in formation to the realities of the world, growth in maturity, self-discovery, and an awareness of their context and God’s presence in it.

In a more connected society, yet at times threatened by disconnection, we intentionally entered contemplation and connection with God, in the Chapel, at Mass, amid mission and ministry, and when sifting through the magnitude of information we were confronted with each day. This was our top priority since we live in a society of ‘fake news,’ disinformation, misinformation, and distractions that could erode our relationship with God and each other.

The journey continues and our commitment to having ongoing formation workshops on community living and prayer is another hope towards revitalizing the lives of the

sisters, knowing that formation is necessary for any committed person who views their relationship with God seriously. The transformation takes place when one is ready to respond according to the call to go back into the water and to go deeper regardless of the time of day. Embracing transformation has brought new life to us as individuals, communities, and the province.

**“Arise, let us go from here.” John 14:31b
Going deeper-Going together - Going beyond”**

Southern African Province



Being signs of HOPE among the people

TRANSFORMATION FOR LEADERSHIP

Transformation for leadership involves encouraging community leaders to exemplify leadership in ways that improve community living. This comprises satisfying important needs and valuing the unique contribution of each sister. Consequently, this inclusiveness spills over into ministries making them far more productive thus adding value to them as well as growth in leadership on various levels outside of community.

Emphasis is placed on leaders encouraging others to take the lead so that individual gifts and strengths are brought to the fore.

- This is evident at province events when individual sisters step in without being asked to assist. In this way, latent talents are released, and sisters' contributions are fresh, pleasant, and appreciated.
- Sisters in various apostolates include the role of stakeholders by encouraging them to share novel ideas, skills, and responsibilities in creative ways.
- When we allow lay people to take the lead with fundraising for various ministries, it frees the sisters from this responsibility. What is important is the supervision of the various levels of participation by encouraging accountability to avoid abuse and mismanagement.
- It is necessary to acknowledge the limitations of sisters' knowledge, expertise, and energy levels and to embrace the input, support and impact of staff, parent bodies and parishioners who influence meaningful change.

This shift towards a more authoritative and inclusive form of leadership in community and ministry, albeit on a small scale, leads to greater resourcefulness in a spirit of freedom and joy. Healthy relationships continue to be strengthened and nurtured.

FORMATION FOR TRANSFORMATION

Our younger members of the province were drawn to religious life for many of the same reasons as our older sisters. They also heard a calling to the life of prayer, community, and the mission of Christ. Although their days as members of the province may look similar, they have grown up in a different world, and their experiences of Catholicism are often indescribable to the older sisters. They know a different Church than a sister who took vows before Vatican II.

Love, respect, and gratitude for the example and ministries of older religious sisters, and for the opportunity to journey alongside them, learn from them and be taught various skills from them, are important aspects for mutual formation and growth. Although our older sisters struggle with diminished energy, they continue to exemplify the charism of our congregation through their generosity and availability for mission. There remains a genuine interest in young people who Come and See despite the fact that not all who visit, show interest in religious life.

Bearing in mind the many possibilities and potential for growth, we encourage our younger members by:

- Ensuring that community life and mission are based on Gospel values emanating from commitment and faithfulness to prayer.
- Inspiring them to be agents of change by engaging in a healthy relationship with God, self, and others.
- Urging them to listen to different viewpoints, grow in discernment, and live responsibly.
- Being strong role models and living with integrity in a spirit of joy.

- Finding balance in daily living that enables fruitful living as opposed to the emphasis on success and achievement.

It is God's will and delight that we actively resist being conformed to this world and seek instead to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. (Romans 12:2) Thus, any approach to transformation that seeks to bring about real change must go beyond merely grasping information at the cognitive level to full knowledge that impacts our deepest inner orientations and trust structures, false-self patterns, and any obstacles that prevent us from fully surrendering to God.

IDENTITY AND MISSION AS HOLY CROSS SISTERS

Transformation is both an end in itself in that it brings glory to God, and it is a means to other ends in that it enables us to mediate the presence of Christ to others and to discern loving action in the world.

Two sisters in our province Sr Rosemarie Watson and Sr Ancilla Nair are octogenarians with a wealth of gifts that they continue to share in their respective ministries. Sr Rosemarie shares of her time, gifts and energy among the residents in different homes for the aged by praying with them and engaging with them in physical and mental activities.

Sr Ancilla Nair is the coordinator of our Educare Centres where children aged six months to five years are catered for on a daily basis while their parents are at work. Sister emphasizes the fact that every child is accepted, and parents are familiarized with the social teachings of the Catholic Church and informed about the Founders of the Holy Cross Sisters and their charism. Learning programs are based on Gospel values and all activities are child centered. Children learn to make the Sign of the Cross with the understanding that our bodies are temples of God.

There has been a definite paradigm shift for parents because they are learning to appreciate the Educare Centre especially when their children achieve developmental milestones. They realize that the staff place far more emphasis on their love for children than a mere salaried job. With Covid-19 and the slump in the economy the school was hit very hard with vandalism and burglaries. Closing the school was not an option and the responsibility to keep the school open became a collaborative project. In the spirit of Mother Bernarda, we faced the challenges and recognized Divine Providence at work as donations poured in.

These days the words of Fr Theodosius seem to echo through our corridors, 'The need of the time is the will of God', as donations of chairs and tables, food bowls and food, enough for six months, arrived from unknown donors.

Most importantly, we are building young minds and preparing them to take their meaningful place in society. Our staff and parents are commended for their support and cooperation. While the school remains unsightly in appearance, our faith in our Provident God continues to grow. As Holy Cross Sisters, despite our diminished numbers and declining years, we stand victorious.

Cape Province

'Jesus can concretely transform us and our lives, if we let Him.' Pope Francis



Sr Rosemarie brings Communion to the aged.



Annual 10 km Big Walks for the elderly...



...teaches the praying of the Rosary.

Holy Cross Educare Centres



Sr Ancilla coaches and teaches on classroom management and classroom techniques for little children.



...happy children enjoying outdoor activities...



Educational Excursions that include families,

Children aged 6 months to 5 years attend our Educare Centres situated among the poor.



Children learn to associate colours with values: Green for RESPONSIBILITY



Fun days are included in the program: Today is Crazy Sunglasses day!

MOVING OUT TO OTHERS

Collaborative and Active Transformative Presence

During the Province Meeting in 2019, the Provincial Leadership Team shared the 2019 General Chapter Message with the whole Province and guided the sisters to choose among the given topics. The sisters decided to start with the Transformation for Leadership, which was followed by the Transformation for Formation, the last one to be processed and worked with was Our Identity and Mission.

EMPOWERMENT OF LOCAL LEADERS

By use of various materials, the provincial leadership team formulated Local Leaders' portfolios as a means of empowering the sisters responsible for leading each community. The provincial councilors responsible for different communities organized meetings between the Provincial Leadership Team (PLT) and Local Leaders. These meetings were to necessitate a conducive working atmosphere so that all leaders could best carry out the vision of the province together.

EMPOWERMENT OF LEADERSHIP IN OUR SCHOOLS



Inauguration of School Leaders at Holy Cross High School St. Elizabeth Training Institute students (Feast of the Holy Cross)

Learners in our schools were also empowered through seminars organized by the provincial leadership to encourage young people to participate in leadership roles. After they completed their training to elect their leaders, these leaders in turn took up various ministries of importance in the school.

The young leaders in the schools showed vibrancy and took their responsibility seriously which has helped with overall discipline. They continue to participate in our feasts, for example the Triumph of the Holy Cross.



TRANSFORMATION FOR FORMATION

For long-term training, the province sent Sr. Anna Khojane to Kenya for a one-year course on initial formation. There was also a short-term training, a three-week formation course, where Sr. Stephania Ranone and Sr. Celestina Tiheli had the opportunity to be trained. Other Formation workshops for young people and ongoing formation for all the sisters were organized. There were also workshops for the Temporary Professed sisters.



From 2019 to 2023, several sisters received professional qualifications in various fields that now equip them for ministry. Through this initiative we have our first fully-fledged social worker for the province. Seven sisters were trained in leadership and financial skills through ASEC.

Motivational professionals were invited to visit our elderly sisters and this gave them great support. Additionally, each community was asked to visit our elderly sisters at 'Ramabanta' Frail Care Centre. As a result of this connection each month a different community visits and spends time entertaining the elderly sisters.



LEADERSHIP & TRANSFORMING PRESENCE

Sr Isidora Damane was employed by the Catholic Bishops of Lesotho to manage and supervise Radio Spes Nostra. Sister is employed as a Station Manager. Through her initiative of rebuilding and improving the project Sister Isidora has made the project sustainable for future generations.

Sr. Isidora as the coordinator of Radio Maria Lesotho now deals with all local affairs and works hand in hand with Radio Maria World Family. As Coordinator she dealt with the following changes and implementations; the changing of the name Radio Spes Nostra to Radio Maria Lesotho and its Constitutions, Broadcasting License, expansion of Radio Maria Lesotho to cover the whole country and the world at large. She was also part of the training for those to be employed and the associates at Radio Maria.



The second training was to help the staff to train the listeners of Radio Maria to understand how it operates and to differentiate Radio Maria from other local radio stations. The training also was extended to the priests and sisters.



IDENTITY

With the help of experts, the Provincial Leadership Team, and the whole Province, studied and is continuing to study our Constitutions quarterly to explore more deeply elements of religious life and our Charism as Holy Cross Sisters. This exercise assisted us in appreciating our Rule and Constitutions. We realized that our Rule, Constitutions, and General Statutes are meant to give life, to remind us that as Holy Cross Sisters, we are unique, and our Charism and Spirituality differs from other religious congregations.

MISSION

Aligned with Laudate Si there is an international movement whereby some sisters attend informative training workshops on how to care for Mother Earth. We work with other religious congregations in the country on this matter. Each year we go to different places to share and educate people on what ecology means and what could be done to repair our damaged earth. For instance, in the Mohale's Hoek District, we went to Mount Carmel Parish. We also shared the message of ecology in our schools and the schools around us. As a response our schools planted trees and in the local area, we began to practice organic farming for healthy eating and economic benefits since it is cheaper than buying artificial fertilizers.



Realizing that the country was in danger due to severe drought and we were not able to produce crops we consulted other religious men and women who were doing well despite the challenging situation to help us. Their guidance enabled the sisters to utilize their talents and search for new ways of building the province and as a result this empowered us and others.

and parishioners we share events. In this way we make our congregation known outside the Diocese of Mohale's Hoek.

Through our catechetical ministry in the parish and in collaboration with other religious congregations, lay Franciscans



Sr. Pauline sharing farming ideas with the villagers

Due to the power of 2019 General Chapter Message, a new life has emerged in the province. Although as a province we try to be a transforming presence we encounter some challenges on this journey. It is by trusting in God we receive help on so many levels. Consequently, we are slowly opening and moving forward because we have not yet reached what we planned to do as a province.



Lesotho Province

Discerning Leadership

A generative outlook towards a new future

LEADERSHIP for TRANSFORMATION

In our effort to ensure continuity and preparation of future prophetic leaders in the congregation, the church, and in society, we have formed 'Think Tanks'⁸ which go beyond the term of office of a Provincial Leadership Team.

In these teams, we conduct leadership mentorship for the future according to the profession of the sisters. So far, we have the following set-in place:

Financial Think Tank consists of sisters who are accountants, economists, and administrators. They work on long term strategies creating financial security, policies, accountability, transparency, and creation of financial sustainability for the province and the institutions where we minister.



The seed sprouts to reflect new life that is emerging in the province

Educational Think Tank foster up to date educational policies to remain relevant as sisters called to serve the young and elders through education.

Spiritual Formation Teams focus on strengthening our spirituality and charism which prepares the province to respond to the future Spiritual needs of the sisters.

Renewal Workshops have been conducted at different levels of ongoing formation and have deepened the common vision of the province, such activities include local leaders' meeting, sharing of the Strategic Plan and, the synodality meeting online. Additionally, meetings which were prepared by the Congregational Leadership Team, such as Global Compact for Education has given birth to the educational commission for our congregation.

Collaboration with other congregations: The collaboration with other congregations through the Zambia Association of Sisterhoods (ZAS) has added value to our style of leadership. Sisters have been involved in workshops such as Media, human growth, human trafficking, safeguarding policies, leadership, and Blended value courses. These programmes have strengthened us to continue to immerse ourselves in the human realities of our time. In addition, in the year 2022, the Provincial Leadership Team joined four other congregations in Zambia to undergo three months online training conducted by the Providence School of Transformational Leadership and Spirituality at St. Paul University, Canada. This program helped us to respond to the challenges that Leaders face in Zambia. It supported us to integrate personal, professional,

⁸ A think tank is a group of people whose sole profession is to read, write, research, and discuss topics that are of importance to the social good. It is a form of collective intelligence.

and spiritual leadership development and to develop the interpersonal and intra-personal competencies needed for inclusive and transformative leadership.

Preparing our institutions for the future calls forth collaboration between the province and the laity. It helps us appreciate the gifts of the lay people and uphold their dignity as well as appreciate their contribution to the common goal. This has already come into effect where lay leaders have been installed and given responsibilities in our institutions so that we can focus our energies on grassroot ministries.

Post Covid 19 Era: COVID 19 pandemic impacted negatively on our social, spiritual, and economical lives. Through reflection and contemplation, we thank God, we have survived all odds and life has gradually returned to normality.

FORMATION for TRANSFORMATION

As a Province, we are convinced that we are called and tasked by Jesus Christ to accompany and guide future members of our Congregation to deepen their relationship with God and essential elements of religious life.

We achieve this through holistic personalized formation through the power of the Holy Spirit who is the 'Principal Formator.'

Our sole purpose is to initiate these new members coming from different nationalities to embrace the spirituality and charism of our congregation and to continue the mission of Jesus through evangelization. We carry out this noble task on our knees through prayer and loving service.

To support the ministry of formation, we train sisters already working in initial and ongoing formation in spiritual and professional courses. The sisters are more confident because they have skills for this unique mission.

In our communities, we have addressed and adapted our timetables to suit the modern demands of community life. Communities are more life giving, more flexible and relevant to the demands of mission.

The formation programme from the initial to ongoing stage has been contextualized to answer the needs of our time. The implementation of this programme is giving life especially to those in initial formation and the juniorate. We uphold the value of respect for human dignity and empowerment as we engage in formation.

We form young women by reinforcing Gospel values for transformation for a better society in the future. Through collaboration with other African Holy Cross provinces, we offer flexibility, diversity, and inclusivity in our formation programmes to embrace young women who come from other African countries, with different cultures and languages. This open formation setting challenges our province to embrace otherness.



The image is an African 'chitenge' showing its versatility and diversity which reflects our personalized formation.

OUR IDENTITY AND MISSION AS HOLY CROSS SISTERS.

We have trained lay leaders with an understanding of our identity to take leading roles in our institutions.



Image depicts our call to mission and reflects our shared humanity.

The recent introduction of the School Online Learning (SOL) is to respond to a new way of learning and educating for transformation. This has brought a lot of life to our population in Zambia and beyond because it is flexible and prepares children for an interactive future life.

In one of our rural communities, in Kopa, the community has created study groups to help the disadvantaged with study techniques. This is helping the students to prepare for exams and it gives them life skills for the future. Engagement and a developed interest in activities such as poetry, drama and debates have reduced the

number of teenage pregnancies as young girls give voice to their identity and self-worth. In addition, a donor in Germany has helped and donated bicycles that has made it possible for children who come from long distances to attend school daily.

The establishment of a new community in a neighboring country. We have taken a risk of opening a new community outside Zambia in our neighboring country, Malawi, in a semi-rural area regardless of being few sisters and the economic challenges that are to be faced. This has brought new life. In collaboration with the Archdiocese of Lilongwe this mission engages the sisters in education and pastoral work.

Our Challenges

We have achieved magnificent milestones in the implementation of the General Chapter Message. In the process we have faced challenges as well. Among the challenges faced is the need to find a balance that maintains a stable routine in some communities because sisters are involved in diverse ministries. Being a young province with an average age of thirty-two years old, we lack personnel among the older sisters to mentor younger sisters. A modern challenge that confronts us is the need to find a healthy balance for the responsible use of social media, among the young and older members alike, as we strive to live community as a priority.

We are facing an accelerated peak in living costs, nationally and globally, due to falling rates in economics and because of the drought experienced in Southern Africa, our other neighboring country.

In all these challenges, we are reminded as a province of people around the world who are worse off than us. These realities give us the determination to focus on the Mission that Jesus has given us to do in all circumstances.

Zambia Province

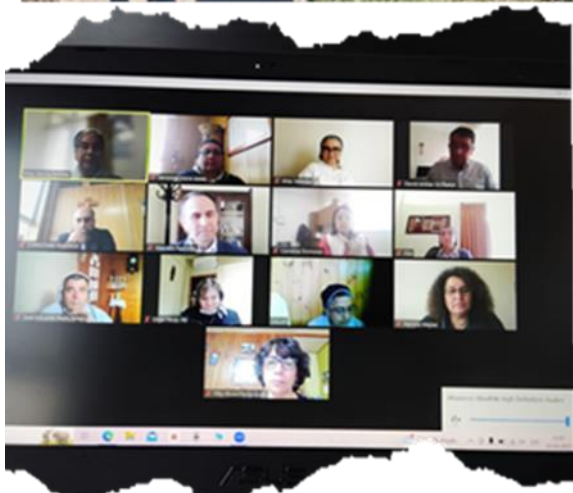
‘Vision with action can change the world’. Nelson Mandela

Common Mission - Common Journey Together to Form and Transform Society

Our Context



The reality of the country: Due to the COVID pandemic (2020-2021) there were severe quarantine rules in the country and the consequences of these were the loss of freedom, confinement, illness and death of sisters, relatives and many people associated with us. The deplorable political, economic, and social situation, both in Argentina and Chile (*at the end of 2019 the social outbreak in Chile*), which impacted strongly our environment and our loved ones, although not directly ourselves as we remained protected.



The reality of our national and local church: The impact of the pandemic was evident in our parishes with the absence of the faithful to the bewilderment of the priests. This led to many questions among the clergy and the laity as to how they would continue. As a positive result new forms of celebration were created over social networks, for example Eucharistic services.



The reality of the province:

Decrease in the number of sisters between 2020-2023 and advanced age of sisters presented challenges of bereavement and loss of vital energies.



*“A reform must first transform the interior
and then unfold from the inside out.”* Father Theodosius



Identity, Mission, Formation for Leadership.

The three emphases of the Message have been deepened in the province through different modes of communication offered by the congregational leadership, namely, written communication; face-to-face, online meetings, these were open forums that invited all sisters and communities to partake.

Significant experiences at provincial level:

The formation given to lay leadership teams and sisters in *leadership for change* and the *Global Compact on Education online sessions*, engaged us in collaborative work from which new initiatives emerged. This



has been followed by the preparation for the Provincial Chapter 2022, with the participation of all the sisters, which shed light on the quality of living these dimensions at a personal and community level, and the need for improvement. The Provincial Chapter in 2022 which outlined the changes needed to renew the communities and mission,

considering the number and age of the sisters, and the need for an overall management improvement. All this, with a view to becoming a transforming presence. From the initiative of Pope Francis to see the Church as 'a process of synodality' and this process to engage all the people of God invited us to travel on a common journey which reinforced the lines of the General Chapter. This was encouraged during the visitation of Sr Dorina and Sr Matilde.

Holy Cross Identity and Mission

Due to the limitations of age and health of our sisters, they experience self-emptying and the need for a simple and trusting faith. It is a daily task to overcome one's own ailments, the discomfort caused by the ailments of others, and the gradual loss of autonomy and independence. The Mystery of death and resurrection is an experience of faith exercised in the ups and downs of each day, in keeping one's spirits alive and sharing joys. The mission of the community in the Region (Community of Quilmes) and in Chile (community of Betania), is expressed in interest for others, for the staff, the families, the country, the Church, the mission and the laity. This continues in our work both in Argentina (School in Bovril) and in Chile, (schools, boarding school, and hospital). To this end, the sisters keep in touch with the congregation and province through various social networks.

Joys



There is an emergence of hope for a better life arising among us. We experience joy as the fruit of hope. Learning to handle and communicate through Zoom was a new learning experience. We value technology for communication between us and others. The visit of our congregational leader and councilor for Latin America made them close to us, because we shared the same language.

They have been charismatic in their visit, and they shared the joy of the Gospel with us and with those with whom we share life through their presence and the message they gave us. They did it through the contact with the laity in the parish and through their work with the management teams in the institutions also through online contact they continued the legacy of the Founders with respect and affection in sharing the richness of our charism especially during the times of Pandemic.

The voice of the Spirit challenges us...



May the Virgin Mary, walk with us.

We feel called to put Christ in the center of our personal and communal lives to draw strength for times of transformation. Also to take up the challenge, given to us by, Sr Dorina and Sr Matilde, "To promote a path of communion and free participation" and to concretize the challenges through deep discernment in a formation plan for ourselves and for our lay leaders. We feel challenged to be more aware of the presence of the Spirit to enter communion with the sisters and to value their being and what God is moulding in each one to be rooted in Christ and to allow ourselves to be transformed by Him. Another call for us to transform our surroundings with our presence is to reach out, to accompany, to listen to, to care for others who walk with us on our common journey.

"Daughters, love prayer and practice it wherever you can, even if it is only by an act or desire of the heart." Mother Bernarda

Latin America Province

KEYS TO A TRANSFORMING PRESENCE

Community - Participation - Community



The General Chapter 2019 has allowed us to re-imagine our consecrated life in the light of the Gospel. It has strengthened the ongoing formation of the sisters in all areas of life; namely spiritual, community and mission. It has given us the opportunity to recreate fraternity with a fresh new look while strengthening the leadership of the local community leaders. Below we share some key experiences in the light of the message:

TRANSFORMATION FOR FORMATION

- To continue to strengthen community life and each sister in it, so that our mission may be fruitful.
- To continue to enhance the skills of each sister as an enrichment that they bring to their service for mission.
- To generate new spaces to meet creatively in ongoing formation with the sisters. We have been more open to promoting and showing the religious life, the style of the Sisters of the Holy Cross through social networking and promotion of the Holy Cross 'Laity' leadership and deepening the life of our Founders.
- To value the life of each sister and her vocation, being grateful and celebrating God's call through the recognition of the years of consecrated life. If we feel happy in the community as sisters, we can witness to our life spent in joy and service, as we minister to others.
- To recognise gifts and talents, learning in a globalised world and promoting an ongoing formation which will allow us to understand and accompany many people whom God puts in our path.
- Strengthening community life as a source revives, and energises our calling to respond to mission with the confidence that we are united in prayer for one another.



In the area of initial formation, the emphasis has been placed on the vocational aspect, reviving the working team and updating our formation programs, in structure and the way of living religious life at the initial stage, ongoing formation and accompaniment for later life.

This style of being in the midst of the Christian community has generated enthusiasm for religious life in the young people. We see our new vocation as a gift God has given us during the 200th year of Mother Bernarda's birthday and as a sign of our presence among the people.



- In this time, we have grown in fraternity, trust, and a better disposition to the mission that God has called us to through the formation, care, and accompaniment of people.
- Motivate the self-education and ongoing formation of the sisters to keep us up to date and to offer the Word of God with greater conviction and passion.

We plan to strengthen fraternal life in the province and to accompany more closely the life of the sisters, seeking ongoing formation so that they may be strengthened with the power of the same spirit as they were with their first call to religious life.



We try to work as a team, to accompany the various roles that the sisters engage in and in this way it makes life easier to cope with the challenges.



Identity and Mission as Sisters of the Holy Cross

In the educational and pastoral field, new guidelines were generated to rethink our mission and service in society.



We believe that community should be the spiritual and emotional hub for each sister on mission.

Confident that it is the Spirit that moves us to unity and from there we project the Paschal Mystery into the world.



United in the Spirit, united in community, united in mission, we are called by the power of the Holy Spirit and we can all cooperate to extend the Kingdom of God



Cunco Province

A message from CLT



“You are the source of all life, and because of your light we see the light” Psalm 36:10

May all our *transformations* always arise from and be nourished by this Source! Let's search for it *together* with perseverance and share it! This is where we find Life and Light. *Life in abundance* for us and for every person we meet.

Dr. Dolima

The radical call for religious women currently is to build together Synodality, a privileged path of conversion, to discern together the steps that we should take to fulfil the mission of Evangelisation. For this, *it is important to have a self-transformation to be a transforming presence to the divided and fractured world in which we live. Our witness can do much more to transform the society and to wake up the world.* As disciples of Jesus, we cannot shirk the responsibility of demonstrating and transmitting the love and tenderness of God to a wounded humanity.



Self-transformation to be a Transforming Presence for our divided world



Dr. Safima



Expectation

and Hope

I think that in recent years we have organized ourselves "in terms of transformation" and we are on our way. This journey involves receiving internal and external, spiritual, environmental, contextual influences and according to them, has been changing and improving the "way" of living the Consecrated Life.

Seeking God in our reality is a beautiful but not easy adventure.

COURAGE SISTERS

matilde



When we let go of anything other than what is right here, right now, we can fly. May it bring transformation in us and perceive newness of life. God bless us.

Sr. Rose Paul

The Paschal Mystery is a reality that surrounds our lives. It is the deep core from which our faith springs forth. It manifests itself in the seasons of each year, the birth of a new born baby and the circle of our existence. Entering the Paschal Mystery is the journey we take that leads to inner Transformation and from our personal experience of what this journey means, we can with conviction be catalysts of change in our society that yearns for hope. Let us be that HOPE for our world today!



Sr. Bernadette



