NEWS FROM CALIFORNIA

FORMATION INTEGRATION WEEKEND February 5-7, 2021

“Charism and Mission in Light of our Ministries”

The Los Angeles Sisters of Social Service formation integration gathers four times during the year, February, June, September and December. To start off this year’s gatherings with Lyn, Mary Grace, Betty in California and Joy, Famelia and Lita in Amadeo, we invited sisters to join two panels and to share how they experience our charism and mission in their ministries. Of course we are still practicing distancing during the pandemic so we met on Zoom.

We began the weekend with a social to greet each other on Friday evening. It is an opportunity for the Novices and the Sisters to visit before the more formal gathering. On Saturday we hosted two panels, one in the morning and one in the evening. The panelists in the morning consisted of: Sisters Joeline, Teresita, Jeanne and Celeste. The afternoon panelists were: Sisters Jennifer, Vangie, Yoly, and Associate Kathie Montserrat.

Top: Mary Grace Nicolas, Lyn Lobo; Bottom: Betty Harbison, and made first promises: Lisa Lopez, and Raquel Cruz
On Sunday, we shared prayer together, Lectio Divina. We then shared thoughts and reflections on, “Our Heritage: Charism and Scripture: The Charism as I Have Received It,” a presentation given by Sister Merita during the Pentecost Retreat in 2007. We had a good discussion not only on Charism and Mission, but the vows as well. Our discussion was followed by an evaluation of the weekend and the dates given for our June Formation Integration weekend when our presenter will be Sister Simone.

HOLY SPIRIT RETREAT CENTER
On March 16th of 2020 Holy Spirit Retreat Center closed down due to the pandemic. All outside groups who use the Center cancelled their scheduled programs and all of our onsite Sponsored Programs were cancelled. We opened a Zoom Pro Account and began to offer some of our programs that already were on the calendar virtually. Our Zoom programs have done well, but without the outside groups that use the Center our income has dropped by roughly 75%! Our regular donors have really come forward in this time of closure and their donations have helped to keep our programs going. We are eternally grateful to all those whose have shared so generously during this time of uncertainty!

On a more positive note, we were able to recondition and refill our lovely lake, which has been dry for over two years. Our Office Manager Debbie DeCaro got the idea to do a memorial walkway with engraved bricks as a fundraiser to help pay off the costs of redoing the lake. People can order bricks by going to our website or calling the office, and we have raised most of what we need to pay off the loan that we received to finish the work on the lake. Once the lake loan is paid off, the money raised will go to other needs at the Center. People can put their own names or their family name on the brick, remember a loved one who has died, or celebrate an event like a wedding or graduation. The idea is really catching on and the walkway is growing! The walkway is composed of grey bricks and the engraved bricks are a tan color which helps them to stand out against the grey.

We all eagerly await the day when we can fully reopen the Center, but in the meantime we take much comfort in the fact that the Center is continuing to offer virtual programs and beginning to open for some onsite retreat activities, which is keeping our staff employed. There is a lot going on at Holy Spirit Retreat Center and we are hoping to welcome all of you back again soon!

Chris Machado, SSS
Director, Holy Spirit Retreat Center
NEWS FROM THE HUNGARIAN DISTRICT

- We go through a difficult time in our district because of the illness of our sisters. Two of our elderly sisters are in hospital with Covid19 infection.
- On the 25th of February Sr. Judit Edelényi died from Covid as she had had several underlying chronic illness. (photo: right)
- Foundress day, January 6, was commemorated by Eucharistic Celebration after which Sr. Ágnes Pataki laid a wreath on the plaque of Sr. Margaret at Holy Spirit Church.
- As part of the preparation for the International Eucharist Congress a program was launched entitled “Adopt a Sister”; seven sisters got involved: https://nek.szerzetesek.hu/fogadj-orokbe-egy-szerzetest-2021-re/
- Our traditional event of receiving communally the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick took place in a close circle, as part of a mass celebrated in our parish church on the 11th of February.

News about our youngest members:
- Formation continues in spite of the lockdown: the novices were in the Matra Mountains. (right)

Other news
- As part of the ongoing formation we had two group trainings on how to manage conflicts, 28 sisters became participated in it.
- We have had Zoom Training for beginners as well as on advanced levels lead by Sr. Ildikó.
- Three sisters participated in the ‘Bartimeus’ program, a national formation program for religious on child protection.
- The ‘under fifty’ group held their meeting as part of the preparation process for the district assembly: the topic was leadership skills.
The CAST conference was held on February 19-20, many sisters and associates participated and they also helped with the logistics. We were happy to meet sisters from all over the world.

*Some pictures about the work behind the scenes:*

News about our ministries:

- Our junior sister Kata, a social worker starts a new ministry among the gypsies in the rural area.
- Sr. Anna committed herself to treat infectious patients and finally became a staff member at Covid Unit of the Hospital For Infectious Diseases.
- Our sister Monika works in a nursing home – the picture is about the carnival there. (*right*)
- Family therapy is especially important during pandemic, because it causes many problems in the families. This is Sr. Éva’s ministry, which she carries out under the umbrella of the Sr. Sara Foundation. (*flyer on the left*)
- Protecting the created world was the topic of Sr. Boro’s presentation she gave as part of her study program: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QVNDdmnhyb-yfqaTAK4it2OviZAEBwEQ/view?ts=6037bf17](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QVNDdmnhyb-yfqaTAK4it2OviZAEBwEQ/view?ts=6037bf17)
- We could even have carnival on Zoom: (*right*)

News about the associates: we are happy to work with our associates, they are growing in numbers within their families as well.
NEWS FROM THE PHILIPPINES

Happy New Year everyone! Greetings from the Philippines Formation House

Meet our aspirant Lita E. Ogale (or Lits), postulant Famela B. Tibayan (or Fam), and novice Princess Joy Dela Cerna (or Joy).

Lita (or Lits) is 20 years old born in Nasugbu Batangas a coastal area close to Vicky Lopez (SSS Associate) house. She likes chocolates and bittermelon and grapes.

Famela (or Fam) is 27 years old, was born in Amadeo Cavite currently teaching in Elementary School. Joy is a novice 25 years old from Sultan Kudarat Mindanao and her favorites is gardening.

What keeps them busy: They are active in ministry such as tutorial group with the college scholars of SSS in the area of Amadeo. The sisters Michele SSS, Sonia SSS, and Nodelyn SSS are giving them formation classes.

As Sisters of Social Service our life is a life time formation with God journey.

NEWS FROM THE ROMANIAN DISTRICT

1. On the 4th of February the Winners of Csik Group coordinated by Sr Zelma Nagy organized the online anti-cancer day, and invited Sr Ildikó Homa, who held a lecture with the title Let’s stress differently. It was a useful, positive, encouraging programme. (photo:right)
2. On the occasion of the World Day of Consecrated Life our sisters organized an alternative online meeting: almost fifty brothers and sisters from different communities took part, and also the bishops of Várad and Temesvár, László Böcskei and József Csaba Pál joined us. The theme was: Meeting within consecrated life otherwise: together in the transforming love. Sr Ildikó Homa presented the document entitled *The Gift of Loyalty and the Joy of Perseverance*, then sr Csilla Gábor conducted a *lectio cum imaginibus*: we „read” and prayed the mosaic of the basilica San Clemente in Rome.

**NEWS FROM THE SLOVAK DISTRICT**

**In the Café with Sr. Sara Salkahazi**

We had online zoom sharing with people on the February 2nd, 2021- on the Day of consecrated life. The idea was based on the theatre performance, which was broadcasted online from the State Theatre in Košice. Young women, mothers, students, our sisters and other people from our parishes accepted our invitation. It was great to hear what messages has Sister Sara's testimony for our lives. The evening was coordinated by Sr. Marta Andraščíková.
Vocation promotion program „Spring“
On January 23-24, 2021 we had the 2nd meeting of our vocation promotion program „Spring“ for 7 young women who are discerning their vocation. The topic was „Me and the Lord“. The aim was to reflect on our lives from God’s perspective, in the light of His love, of prayer and faith. The responsible sisters for the program are Sr.

Ongoing formation meeting
Finally professed sisters met via zoom on January 21, 2021. The main topic was sharing our lives, enriching and encouraging each other. Common prayer was included, as well. We are grateful to see each other at least this way. The responsible sisters for the ongoing formation are Zuzana Vrbinárová, Mária Paceková and Ľudmila Surmajová.

Invitation to Radio Pátria
On the occasion of the Day of consecrated life, Sisters Agnesa Filipová and Magdaléna Latiková received an invitation to RTVS - to Radio Pátria, where they took part in a live broadcast of the Holy Mass. After Holy Mass, the sisters gave a short interview about our charism, mission and the characteristics of the Society of Social Sisters.
(Srs. Magdi Latiková and Ági Filipová in the middle)

The novices in Martin
In February, the novices Zuzka and Majka came to Martin to experience our community life. As much as possible and as the pandemic has allowed for it, we have experienced a blessed time together within the community and also in the parish. Together we celebrated the day of consecrated life, we had
(From the left to the right: novice Mária Adamcová, sr.Zuzana Valuszová and sr. Magdaléna Slyšková)
meetings with sisters in our region, got to know Martin's surroundings, participated in the Zoom meeting of young people within the parish, lead a catechesis for catechumens, cleaned the pastoral center and deepened our relationships.

*(From the left to the right: sr. Marcela Chromeková, sr. Magdaléna Slyšková, sr. Zuzana Valuszová, novice Zuzana Škrinárová)*

**Carnival before Lent**
It belongs to our tradition in Slovakia to have Carnival before Lent. This year has not been an exception either ... via zoom.


**Lenten Monday Evenings with Quotations from Sr. Sara Salkahazi**
Our novice Flóra Kovácsová has prepared prayers for the Lenten season with quotations from Sr. Sara. It is going to be offered every Monday during Lent and the prayers are based on reflections on the Stations of the Cross. Each meeting includes two or three stations, music, quotations from Sr. Sara and sharing. It started on February 22nd, 2021.
Preparing for Easter based on „The Chosen“ movies
Sister Marta Andraščiková and our sisters prepared renewal program for young people in cooperation with other religious communities and vocation promotion program Angelus. The idea is based on the movies „The Chosen“. Every week includes: a common meeting, one hour of watching the episode, reflecting on it, praying with the Scriptures with the same topic as the episode of the movie and Spiritual accompaniment by religious sister or brother and sharing. About 40 religious sisters and brothers are involved to the program. We registered about 90 young participants. The first organizational meeting of consecrated women and men was on February 21st, 2021