



MISSIONARY SISTERS  
of the SACRED HEART of JESUS  
*Bringing Christ's love to the world*

THE UPDATE

February 6, 2020

## Working at the Border

In 2019 the Cabrini Mission Foundation expanded its work with immigrants by visiting the border city of Laredo, TX and partnering with a shelter which receives immigrants and asylum seekers once they are released from United States detention centers.



Rio Grande Detention Center, Laredo, TX

It is hard to [comprehend] the size of such detention centers. The Rio Grande Detention Center in Laredo, TX for example, houses an estimated population of over 1,900 detainees.



From left: Sr. Pietrina Raccuglia, MSC, Cabrini Mission Foundation Chair, Sr. Diane Olmstead, MSC, Provincial, Guadalupe Province, and Christopher LaBianco, CMF Executive Director, visited the border last month.

In July of 2019 the U.S. government, through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), began enforcing its new Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), or the “Remain in Mexico” policy under which the U.S. government returns certain asylum-seekers to Mexico to wait through the duration of their pending cases in the U.S. immigration court system.

In short, asylum seekers wait in Mexico without access to family, legal, or social support. As we are told, as of August 2019, over 98 percent of those subject to this policy have not been able to



A tent city that has grown in Matamoros, Mexico right across the U.S. border.

obtain legal representation. Undoubtedly, this will make it more difficult for those subject to the policy to successfully assert their asylum claims and will also risk retraumatizing them in the unsafe conditions in which they are forced to wait.

With word of the impact the “Remain in Mexico” policy is having on the number of people making it to our shelter partner in Laredo, TX, the Cabrini Mission Foundation headed back to the border but this time to McAllen, TX.



From left: Ashley Feasley, Director of Policy, Migration and Refugee Services of the USCCB; Sr. Yolanda Flores, MSC; Sr. Norma Pimentel, MJ, Executive Director of Catholic Charities, Rio Grande Valley; Sr. Pietrina Raccuglia, MSC, President, Cabrini Mission Foundation (CMF) and Christopher LaBianco, Executive Director, CMF discuss the challenges of the new immigration policy.

the border that the new immigration policy poses.

The Foundation provided supplies to make 500 sandwiches and crossed the border in Matamoros, Mexico to aid the migrants in the newly formed tent city at the United States border.

There are an estimated 2,500 people living in tents at the border. The families are resourceful and incredibly optimistic. They have managed to make the tents a “home” and have constructed stoves out of mud and wood pallets. In addition to Catholic Charities and the Cabrini Mission Foundation there are a number of philanthropic organizations providing services for the people in Matamoros. But there is still much to be done.

The Cabrini Mission Foundation has received a number of requests for funding to provide for additional needed infrastructure in the area. The Foundation is also seeking partners who are directly providing services in the tent city to ensure a Foundation investment will have the hoped-for community impact. The Cabrini Mission Foundation looks to send both financial support and volunteers to the Matamoros, Mexico in the coming year.

~ submitted by Christopher LaBianco, Executive Director, Cabrini Mission Foundation



Trying their best to make a home out of a tent, parents are facing challenges in caring for their children in such difficult conditions.

Sr. Pietrina Raccuglia, MSC, Sr. Yolanda Flores, MSC, and Cabrini Mission Foundation Executive Director, Christopher LaBianco met with Sr. Norma Pimentel, MJ the Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, and Ashley Feasley, Director of Policy, Migration and Refugee Services of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to discuss the challenges at



Sr Yolanda (l.) and Sr. Pietrina are ready to distribute the provisions for 500 sandwiches.

For more information please feel free to contact Christopher LaBianco, [clabianco@cabrinifdn.org](mailto:clabianco@cabrinifdn.org) or at 212-375-0110.



## Eight Months of Life and Mission in Uganda

The Missionary Sisters arrived in Uganda on April 23, 2019 during the octave of Easter, among people who looked at us with suspicion – and with a question. “Who are our guests?” We remembered that they are people who have experienced the trauma of war and therefore, were scared, suspicious and afraid.

In the first few days, we stayed in Kampala, the capital city, to start the process for work permits to enable us to stay in Uganda. Then, we headed towards our new home in Dzaipi, which was not yet finished. We had challenges with water, electricity, gas, without internet etc. ... but thanks be to God we were able to overcome them. Another challenge is the language. We are a community composed of five people from four different cultures and languages, living in the midst of a people where each tribe or group has its own language. Therefore, we really need to use translators, to have a lot of love and patience with ourselves and the people of this mission.

We started holding meetings with each community creating a space for conversation to listen to their needs, their greatest challenges and hopes. In general,

everyone expected us (because we were foreigners) to bring money to build a church and water wells in some communities; and medicine, food, and support for the children’s school. We did not promise anything in terms of ‘money’ but a presence to create conditions of life with dignity together.

Knowing the leaders of the communities, especially the catechists who are a highly respected moral authority here, we set out to visit and prioritize the sick, the elderly and the orphaned children. Entering these houses, we encountered situations of extreme poverty, of the sick, the blind, the elderly people living alone; of adolescents taking care of their orphaned brothers and sisters; of young people dying due to snake bites, malaria, typhoid and other illnesses due to a lack of medicine, poor hygiene, lack of food – their basic needs are not being met. Hospitals and health centers are very limited and cannot cope with the needs of sick people. Another finding is the high number of children and adolescents (64% of the population are children.)

They are a people of great faith. Despite their suffering and experience of years of war and losses they still know how to smile, pray, dance and celebrate and live a simple life.

~ by Sr. Albertina, MSC ~ submitted by Sr. Barbara Staley, MSC

To read the complete edition of The Christopher: <https://www.mothercabrini.org/news-and-publications/the-christopher-news-from-the-msc-generalate/>



From left: Sr. Mercedes, Nathalie, Sr. Albertina, Sr. Joseane and Sr. Addise.



Sr. Mercedes ministers to a community member.

*From the Province Vocation Promotion Team...*

## The World Day for Consecrated Life

On February 1, 2020 Sr. Martha Lopez, MSC and Sr. Lucy Panettieri, MSC participated in the blessing of Candles and the \*Akathist of Jesus, Light to Those in Darkness. This ceremony took place in the Cathedral of Denver. It was an Ecumenical Liturgy of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches of Denver. Celebrants were: Archbishop Samuel Aquila (Denver), Bishop Jorge Rodriguez, Auxiliary Bishop, with priests representing the Ruthenian and Ukrainian Catholic Church. A magnificent choir from Sr. Cyril and Methodius Russian Catholic Community. sang the entire liturgy. ~ submitted by Sr. Lucy Panettieri, MSC, Director of Vocations, Guadalupe Province



Many various congregations including the Cabrini Sisters (MSCs) were present to celebrate The World Day for Consecrated Life. It was a wonderful witness for religious life seeing so many congregations represented.

*\*An **Akathist** Hymn (Greek: Ἀκάθιστος ὕμνος, "unseated hymn") is a type of hymn usually recited by Eastern **Orthodox** or Eastern Catholic Christians, dedicated to a saint, holy event, or one of the persons of the Holy Trinity.*



Aztec dancers provide a regal welcome for the baby Jesus.

## The Presentation of Our Lord

On February 2, 2020 Sr. Lucy Panettieri, MSC participate in the Mass of the Presentation of our Lord at Ascension Church where Sr. Martha Lopez, MSC is missioned. It was a wonderful experience seeing so many Catholic Hispanic men, women and children present at Mass. We calculated at least 1500 people were present. The entrance procession was led by Aztec dancers with their magnificent native garb. A couple represented Joseph and Mary with their own baby characterizing baby Jesus. Of course, Simeon and Anna could not be absent on such an occasion.

Ascension Church has six masses and each Mass has more than a thousand parishioners celebrating the Eucharist together.



After Mass, we gathered in the parish hall to celebrate with typical dancing, food and toys for all the children. What a festive activity to celebrate the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple and the Purification of Mary, Mother of God.  
*~submitted by Sr. Lucy Panettieri, MSC*

**Photo right:** Sr. Martha Lopez, MSC (r.) narrates the presentation of Our Lord.

**Photo below:** Mary and Joseph, Simeon and Anna bring forth the child Jesus to be presented.



**Photos above and left:** Following the Mass, a joyous celebration took place in the parish hall. Dancers in colorful native costumes performed traditional dances.



The exposition of the Blessed Sacrament was an integral part of the Gift of Mission vocation day. The young ladies said they appreciated the opportunity for quiet and reflection during the course of the program.

## The Gift of Mission

Each year, the Missionary Sisters participate in the Gift of Mission interactive vocation program for high school juniors. Yesterday, over 60 students hailing from Bishop Shanahan H.S., Pope John Paul II H.S., York Catholic H.S., and McDevitt H.S. in PA and Gloucester Catholic H.S. in NJ joined an intercongregational team of vocation directors for the workshop.



# Celebrating Candlemas Day Across the Globe



Many traditions surround the recently celebrated feast of Candlemas on February 2.

In the [United Kingdom](#), good weather at Candlemas is taken to indicate severe winter weather later. (And this is the traditional day for Christmas evergreen decorations to be removed from Buckingham Palace.

In the [United States](#), Candlemas coincides with [Groundhog Day](#) and may have come from a German-American Candlemas tradition, this year indicated an early Spring.

In [France](#) and Belgium, Candlemas is celebrated with [crêpes](#).

In [Italy](#), traditionally, it is considered the last cold day of winter.

[Tenerife \(Spain\)](#), is the day of the [Virgin of Candelaria](#)

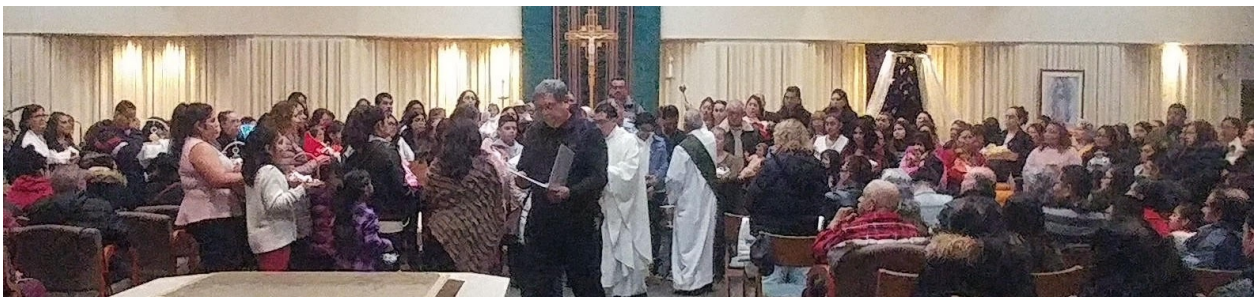
In Southern and Central [Mexico](#), and [Guatemala City](#), Candlemas is celebrated with [tamales](#). Tradition indicates that on January 5, the night before the Epiphany, whoever gets one or more of the few plastic or metal dolls buried within the [Rosca de Reyes](#) must pay for the tamales and throw a party on Candlemas. In certain regions of Mexico, this is the day in which the baby Jesus of each household is taken up from the [nativity scene](#) and dressed up in various colorful, whimsical outfits.

Rosi Viquez from Church of the Holy Spirit in Schaumburg, IL, describes the celebration the Mexican community held at her parish on February 2 this year: "We had a volunteer who decorated the cubicle! Over 100 parishioners brought their Baby Jesus for our initial procession and then the final blessing. Our new Baby Jesus\* had a "Madrina" (sponsor) who made his little outfit and laid him down in the basket. Darkness in the background was broken by stars, candles, and Jesus who is our Light! It was a beautiful celebration. Most touching was the community in veneration and seeing people go up to the baby to kiss his feet. They took family photos with our Baby Jesus. Afterward, we had the traditional celebration of the Candelaria with tamales and atole, a warm sweet corn drink often paired with tamales. It was a faith-filled and community-building experience! Thank you so much for the lovely gift. He is being taken good care of!"



*~ submitted by Sr. Cathy Fedewa, CSFN, Cabrini Retreat Center*

*\*The infant statue Rosi speaks of here was donated to the parish by Sr. Cathy Fedewa's community.*



The Candlemas celebration of the Mexican community at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Illinois.



# Cabrini University

## 2020 Mother Ursula Infante Memorial Lecture “Faithful Politics”

**Wednesday, February 12, 2020**  
**4:30PM, Grace Hall Atrium**



### John Carr

Founder and Director  
Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life  
Georgetown University

#### *Toast and Reception to follow*

John Carr is the founder and director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life at Georgetown University. He served for over 20 years as director of the Department of Justice, Peace, and Human Development at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, directing the Conference's public policy and advocacy efforts on major domestic and international issues as well as sharing Catholic social teaching on human life and dignity, solidarity, faithful citizenship, and care for creation.

Mr. Carr's lecture is the keynote for our **LIVING JUSTICE in the American Catholic Church** spring lecture series. Sponsored by the **Wolfington Center** at Cabrini University, this year's theme is "Building a Civilization of Love: Faith and Politics in the United States." It will feature two panel discussions with scholars, activists, and public figures discussing forms of political involvement coming out of faith communities in the Philadelphia area.

**For more information please email Dr. Ray Ward, Director of the Wolfington Center: [rew68@cabrini.edu](mailto:rew68@cabrini.edu). RSVPs are welcome but not necessary, please contact Megan Norris: [mln49@cabrini.edu](mailto:mln49@cabrini.edu).**

*From the Province Vocation Promotion Team...*

## **LIFE AWARENESS RETREAT**

**Disconnect and Plug into the Voice of God**

L  
I  
S  
T  
E  
N



D  
I  
S  
C  
E  
R  
N

**March 20-22, 2020**

**Arrival: Friday 4-6 p.m.**

**Departure: Sunday 1 p.m.**

**Ages 18-45**

**Mother Boniface Spirituality Center  
3501 Solly Avenue  
Phila., Pa. 19136**

**Contact: Sr. Ivette Diaz  
[Idiaz@mercymidatlantic.org](mailto:Idiaz@mercymidatlantic.org)  
or 494-562-1574**

*Free Will*

**Donation: \$75-\$150**  
*(includes program, meals and lodging)*

**Please RSVP by March 11**

*Offered by the NRVC Delaware Valley Vocation Directors*

Facing a major decision in your life? Thinking about attending graduate school; making a job change; doing post-grad volunteer service or deciding on a career path? This retreat weekend will be the perfect opportunity to find a quiet setting to reflect and to invite God into your decision-making.

Questions? Contact Nancy Costello: 610-902-1039 or email: [mscvocations@mothercabrini.org](mailto:mscvocations@mothercabrini.org)



# Prayer Requests

## ***Jerry***

A friend requests prayers for her brother Jerry who is very ill and depressed.

## ***Nikka Macabalo***

Cabrini Lay Missionary Vicky Lucio asks prayers for her niece, Nikka Macabalo, 30 years of age, who recently suffered a stroke. Vicky thanks God her niece is now out of the hospital but she will be undergoing series of tests in the next coming days to see what the next steps in treatment will be. Please keep Nikka's long term recovery in your prayers.

## ***Dr. Antoinette Iadarola***

Your prayers are requested for Cabrini (College) University President Emerita Antoinette Iadarola, Ph.D. who has been hospitalized while visiting her sister in Florida. Please pray that Toni will soon be discharged and will be feeling better. We thank everyone for your prayers and offer a request for continued prayers.

## ***Migrants and Refugees***

We pray that the cries of our migrant brothers and sisters, victims of criminal trafficking, may be heard and considered.

## ***Maria Williams***

Prayers are asked for Maria Williams from England who is a Cabrinian scholar and dear friend of the MSCs who is very ill. Please pray for her swift recovery.

## ***Kristina Yu***

Please pray for Kristina, the niece of Rosalind Yu, a good friend of Sr. Grace Waters, MSC. Kristina recently had surgery which was successful. Prayers are needed for her recovery and follow-up treatment.



## With a Grateful Heart

### ***Joe Melton***

Sr. Grace Waters, MSC and her family wish Joe Melton, Sr. Grace's cousin, a very Happy 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday on February 16<sup>th</sup>. The family will fete Joe with a festive party. The MSCs and the Cabrinian community join Sr. Grace in sending good wishes and birthday greetings to Joe on his special day.

## In Loving Memory

### ***Annabelle M. Logue***

The Cabrinian Community joins the University Community in extending sympathy to Dr. Lyn Berenato, Assistant Professor, Educational Specialist Department, on the loss of her mother, Annabelle M. Logue, who passed away on Friday, January 31, 2020.