



*Missionary Sisters  
of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

## *To the Ends of the Earth*

Prot.S.G. – L. 048/2020

1 February 2021

Dear Sisters, Partners-in-Mission, and Sharers of the Charism,

As I write to you, many of you are facing great challenges personally and in your ministries as a second or third wave of Covid-19 hits, and governments respond with various measures. It is easy to get swept up in the turmoil of each situation, be it pandemic, political instability, or economic uncertainty. For some it may be a case of using all your energy just to press forward, for others you may have found a way of working amidst increasing demands.

I encourage all of us to take the time to reflect, glean from this past year valuable lessons, in order to move forward with greater wisdom and ongoing determination. These difficulties and blessings have meaning. Let us unite them through meditation to those of Christ and allow ourselves to grow through these experiences. Let us reflect upon what we did and why we did it. With our insights we can then continue to transform our actions, always discovering better or more efficient ways of being “bearers of the love of Christ to the world” as we build our future together.

I remind us that where we find ourselves today is not a bubble in time, but part of our sacred history and tradition. It is an ongoing trajectory and development in our understanding of ourselves and in our understanding of what God desires of us and for us today. Reflecting helps us put in perspective the part of history we have been building, in light of what God is calling us to as individuals and collectively as one Body in Christ.

Amidst the great loss and sufferings, definite strides were taken toward accomplishing our shared mission this past year. You went beyond the call of duty in your various offices to ensure that people you serve were taken care of, being among the most vulnerable in your societies. Others of you had to rethink the way you ran your organization or programs, becoming leaner and more adaptable. As we work towards assuring sustainability of our mission and vision, we need to be flexible and open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We need to think deeply and carefully about what we are doing, and how we are doing it, learning from what we could have done better, seeing opportunities, and strategically chartering a path forward. In this “favorable time”, let us continually ask, “what is it that we can do better as we seek to sustainably serve those to whom we are called?”.

Mother Cabrini provides us clear direction on this matter: “We should try to meditate with great recollection, as if in the profound silence of a tranquil night. Our mind should dwell on the topic and ponder what we can learn to nurture our souls. Then our wills can embrace

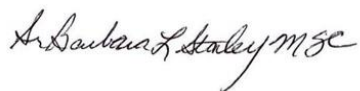


what has been learned and use it to change our lives.” *St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, Journal of a Trusting Heart, retreat notes of St. Francis Xavier Cabrini, Christmas 1894 to January 1, 1895.*

Health and peace upon your lives, and blessings upon your work, I am grateful for all of you. May your hearts and minds remain open to new ways of being harvesters of God’s fruitfulness, continuing to work towards unity with Him, and one another, in all you do.

Yours in the Heart of Christ,

*Sr Barbara Staley, General Superior, MSC*



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## ***Reflection from the General Council***

**Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde*; Pope Francis**

### **St. Joseph, A tender and loving father**

***Joseph saw Jesus making progress day by day “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man”. (Lk 2v52). As the Lord did to Israel, so he “I taught Ephraim to walk, who took them in my arms; I drew them with human cords, with bands of love; I fostered them like one who raises an infant to his cheeks; Yet, though I stooped to feed my child” (cf. Hosea 11:3-4).***



*Photo 1. Saint Joseph with the Christ Child Sleeping in his Arms, Camilo Francisco, 1652.*

***Jesus saw the tenderness of God in Joseph: “As a father feels tenderness for his children, so the Lord feels tenderness for those who fear him” (Ps 103:13).***

Also, our Holy Mother put herself under the protection of Saint Joseph, with all confidence in his tenderness as a Father, in his advice as a wise and just man, and she begged him to direct her spiritually:

***“You are so good, St. Joseph; Imprint on me your likeness and help me to always enjoy my infant Jesus! Your gifts are great indeed and I cannot find words with which to thank you. I confide all to you. (...) To you I entrust my spirit; direct it in that true interior life that is free from self-deceit in profound humility and in dear simplicity” (J. of a T. H P. 31).***

Like the Holy Mother, let us place ourselves, in this year dedicated to him, under the protection of St. Joseph, trusting that he will take us in his arms as a loving father and guide, as he guided the first steps of Jesus, our spiritual life and our responsibility in the Mission.

*Sister Stella Maris Elena, MSC*



## *Annual Report from the International Health Commission*

We started the year with the goal of completing the baseline assessments for the health services in Argentina, Ethiopia and Guatemala. In mid-February, Mario Raviglioni, Angela Paraluppi and I completed the external review of the two clinics in Guatemala. It was a joy to meet the staff and see the services in action first-hand. However, signs were already emerging that travel to Argentina and Ethiopia might be problematic. Three days prior to our visit, the World Health Organisation had announced the strange new respiratory disease caused by the novel coronavirus would be named COVID-19. At the time, we didn't know how familiar the term COVID-19 would become! However, within a month, COVID-19 was declared a pandemic and it was clear our priorities would need to change.

Throughout the year we began each meeting by reflecting on the state of the pandemic, the infection rate in each of our realities and the rising death toll. Whilst the impact in Europe and the USA was unbelievably devastating, we were concerned that most of our health services operate in resource-poor nations where health care capacity is inadequate even in normal times. The countries they would normally look to for support were dealing with their own health crises, which made accessing resources even more challenging. Drawing on the expertise within the IHC, we advised on infection prevention and control protocols and assisted in advocacy for country preparedness. As the year progressed, we were heartened to hear how well the staff were adapting to and managing the challenges to keep their communities safe.

Although the pandemic is still raging, global learnings have already emerged from which we can take heart. The JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association) Network quotes three lessons of relevance to us:

- It is important for every country to have **core health system capacities** such as surveillance, laboratories, human resources and risk communication.
- **Public trust and leadership** are essential for implementing effective population-based health measures, such as handwashing, physical distancing and face coverings.
- Health care needs to be **available to people where they live**.

Although our health care footprint is small, in the main our health services are contributing to building system capacity in countries and neighbourhoods where human development is most challenged. Each of these services is embedded in the community it serves and is often the only provider of health care there. Further, our external reviews in Eswatini and Guatemala found each community had a very high level of trust in the staff and services provided and, from the self-assessments, we anticipate this is true in every setting in which we operate. We should be proud of how well each of our services measures up against these learnings.

Alongside the pandemic response, we spent time reviewing our purpose and determining how we can best contribute to the MSC Institute. We participated in two conversations



facilitated by Mark Davis as part of the General Chapter engagement process. These were formative for us, enabling our operating principles to be surfaced and helping us identify how we can add value.

Looking to the year ahead, we want to support the health missions to strengthen their expression of Cabrini mission and charism and to improve the quality of services they deliver through technical advice and assistance with resource mobilisation. We also have two dreams. Firstly, that collaboration between the missions coupled with access to research and evaluation expertise will result in programs of excellence, such as in cervical cancer prevention and treatment, that save lives and serve as a model for other resource poor settings. Secondly, that the experience of the communities the missions serve will enable us to advocate for the social and structural changes that are required to enable better health outcomes for all. We look forward to these dreams becoming a reality in the coming year.

*Cath Garner*  
*Chair, International Health Commission*



*Photo 2, 3, 4, 5. Health services in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Eswatini and Australia during 2020.*

*The **International Health Commission (IHC)** is a collaboration of health professionals and MSCs that provide guidance to strengthen the MSC-sponsored health ministries*

[Visit the International Health Commission section on the website: Cabrini World](#)





## *Expressing our Charism Through Ethical Financial Stewardship and Impact Investing*

We enter this new year with renewed optimism, deeper focus, and even stronger determination to respond to the world's most pressing needs. The COVID-19 pandemic underscores the economic inequalities and social injustices that plague our planet. It also reenforces our office's role as an agent for positive economic and social change. As mission-driven finance professionals, we are uniquely positioned to use temporal goods for the benefit of the common good. Moreover, we must catalyze other asset owners to invest in a more inclusive economic system.

Like all Cabrini partners-in-mission, we faced special challenges in 2020. Finding balance was the main test. We are responsible for **stewarding resources to support our communities and existing works** as well as **emerging missions that respond to the most vulnerable populations**. The global health and economic crises heightened the needs of all stakeholders whilst stirring financial risk. Balancing all these factors was not easy. Responding to urgent needs around the Cabrini World even as we were developing structures to sustain mission finance over the long term also proved challenging. Still our challenges seem trivial when we consider the millions of lives and livelihoods lost in 2020.

As 2020 ended, we reflected on our ongoing journey. We are mindful that our journey is just beginning. We will continue to be bold, faithful, flexible, and patient. We must learn from others and through our own experiences. We remain committed to our formation and to expressing our charism through **ethical financial stewardship and impact investing**.

*Gregory Lane and Kayoko Lyons,  
On behalf of the Generalate Finance Team*

*Photo 6, 7, 8, 9 Photo  
Credit from the left:  
NewBees, Mission  
Driven Finance and  
EcoFiltro, three of the  
organizations we are  
supporting through  
our impact investing  
work.*



[Visit the Social Impact Investing section on the website: Cabrini World](#)



## Harvesting the Fruits of the Year

In May 2020, together with our colleagues in Rome and Chicago, we renewed our commitment to clear, constructive and regular communication with one another and externally. We were already in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, an event that profoundly changed our year and our practices, but one which also opened up new pathways for us.

Throughout 2020 each of us has been challenged in different ways, individually, socially and economically. Together we witnessed how the pandemic accelerated and amplified many global events: increasing polarization within and between nations and the rise of



Photo 10. Cabrini World Advent project involving more than 80 elderly Sisters.

nationalism, extreme racism and the fight back against it through the Black Lives Matter movement and others who stood against racism, the emergence of deep-rooted fears which inhabit the hearts of all human beings, and an ever increasing exploitation of our Common Home along with the most vulnerable who inhabit it.

We also chose to have eyes to see how people gave voice to their fears, their hopes, claiming the power to be heard and defend their rights

and their dignity. We listened to the stories of so many hidden people who fought their own loneliness and yet extended a hand to their neighbors. **All of these stories were small yet significant signs of hope during this period of uncertainty.**

As increasingly people were forced to stay at home, they turned to various forms of media and we saw how mass media often responded as a sounding board for fears and extreme tones. However there were some that told the stories of the most hidden realities in which life continued to flow, even in amidst suffering. For us too, the challenge has been great and we have had to change our plans many times. Throughout the year we always kept a firm **focus on giving voice to the love and resilience that encompassed our entire Cabrinian world.**

This past year we understood more of how our work in Communications is a mission, reaching places and people where others physically cannot go. We started exploring new modes and means to extend our message. An example of this is the **Cabrini World Blog** which is a partnership with you, whereby your views on pertinent issues key to our charism are shared, including education of the heart, and services to people on the move. In all of our communications, we



Photo 11. Cabrini World Blog [www.cabriniworld.org](http://www.cabriniworld.org).



have been delighted at your avid response, which has seen an equitable representation of contributions throughout the Institute this past year.

Echoing what Pope Francis said several times in 2020, this is the fruit we reap: **no one is saved alone**. We look at the new year with the desire of listening more deeply to what our Cabrinian world and the entire world has to say; doing our best to highlight and spread how we are loving in every sponsored ministry; strengthening our unity and interconnection; and growing in competence and mutual knowledge. There is much you can look out for from us, including a new website launching soon...

Our aim is regaining possession of the *abundant* life that God has freely given us, preparing our hearts and minds to begin the new year in the Cabrinian spirit, at the service of the most vulnerable.

*Tatiana Paradiso, Giulia Angelucci and Nicole Rose  
On behalf of the Generalate Communications Team*



*Photo 12. Sister Barbara Staley and Sister Bernadette Anello during the online meeting of all the Sisters on November 18.*

***“I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.”  
(John 10:10)***



## THE ESSENCE OF LOVE

*A Reflection Over My Years in Mission of The Essence of Love*



*Photo 13. Christmas celebrations for families and children in Kit, South Sudan (December 2020)*

The *Essence of Love* embodies these “essentials” of love: — self-giving, joy in presence, genuineness, authenticity, reliability, trustworthiness, open to loss/change/alteration and yet remaining faithful, and sacrificing without counting the cost. It involves working hard to stay in communication, respectful of space and boundaries, waiting for signs to approach, even while enduring great suffering. There is an attentive listening, and readiness to take initiatives.





The *Essence of Love* is forgetting oneself and doing what is needed, what is better and necessary for the situation at hand, for along with the person in the “here and now” of this day, the “today” of our lives. The essence of love sees the other with eyes that come from the inside of one’s heart, where Jesus’ Heart so longs and yearns to respond through us to a brother and/or sister He has been waiting for.

The *Essence of Love* in the Cabrinian Charism allows for the exchange of hearts with Jesus the Christ, so that it truly is He who prompts and moves towards loving the other in the strength, courage, transparency of the Gospel values Jesus gave us in the Beatitudes and throughout His Life. Not holding back, not giving in to discouragement, or doubt in the cost and darkness.

The *Essence of Love* is “whole”-hearted and for the whole of one’s life. It is incarnated, made flesh and lives on beyond the words and actions, in a



Photo 15. Christmas celebrations for families and children in Kit, South Sudan (December 2020)

presence which is truly the Body of Christ, the Reign on the move, Emmanuel in our midst. It is a participation in the one, all embracing, everlasting Love of the Triune God who continues creating and recreating us and our world. He who redeems us from the darkest dungeons of our oblivion and condemnation of self and others to death. God, whose gentle breeze and saving breath fills our lungs, lifts us up, and is the “wind beneath our wings”. We are made capable to respond to the universal call He makes to all of

us His Children: to trust, to let go, to learn love and be loved. We do this by freeing ourselves and putting on the wings of His Self-giving Spirit!

*Feast of the Epiphany, January 3, 2021*  
Terezinha Esperança Merandi, MSC



Photo 16. From left: Sister Terezinha Esperanza Merandi; Brother Christy John, CMF; and Sister Scholasticah Nganda, RSM, Director (Kenya).

*Sister Thérèse Hope (Terezinha Esperança) Merandi is a dual citizenship MSC (USA, Brasil), living and working in South Sudan at present. 40 years of her missionary life has been involved in religious formation ministry.*

*At present **Sr. Thérèse** is the **Spiritual Director** at the [Good Shepherd Peace Center](#) in Kit, South Sudan, and part of the Pastoral Team at [Solidarity with South Sudan](#). She is involved in on-going formation, spiritual direction and directed retreats, as well as other trauma healing and accompaniment of persons and groups as requested at the Center. The Center’s purpose is empowerment towards reconciliation, peace and unity among persons and groups, in this newest of nations on earth, South Sudan.*





# 2020 Highlights from the Provinces

On August 15<sup>th</sup> we celebrated the **Perpetual Profession of Sr. Juana Clarivel** in Nicaragua.

A second dose of the **COVID-19 vaccination** was administered to the **residents and staff at St. Cabrini Nursing Home, Dobbs Ferry!** Seen here is Sr. Mary Ann Hawes, MSC with a smile on her face as she receives her inoculation! "I'm so happy today!" said Sr. Mary Ann. We are too, Sister!

Financial **assistance and donations of essential items** post **Hurricane ETA and Lota to Nicaragua** and surrounding areas through World Vision.



## GUADALUPE PROVINCE

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Like other social services agencies, Cabrini Immigrant Services NYC has had to adjust and 'retool' during the pandemic. They distributed around **1,000 bags of food per week to those experiencing food insecurity.**

**Unveiling of Mother Cabrini Battery Park, NY – Oct 12th, 2020.** The spirit of Mother Cabrini endures... She is a shining symbol of what it means to care for the other person, the sick, the uneducated, the economically challenged and the stranger.

### England

This region is very grateful for the incredible, constant and intense work that **St. Francesca Cabrini Primary School in London** has been able to carry out since the pandemic began.

### Ethiopia

A new **program for babies and children Under-5 with severe malnutrition** began, as an integrated Mother and Child Health Support Program which works in collaboration with St. Mary Primary Hospital. The Pre-schools closed early on due to Covid-19. A **home-visit program was developed** for assessment and support of the children and their families.

## HOLY SPIRIT REGION

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### Uganda

During the year, despite the lockdown, the sisters decided to begin to go out into the local host community (not the settlement refugee communities which was prohibited). **They began visiting the elderly and sick, and praying with them.** This brought such joy among the sisters and the community.

### Eswatini

The clinic saw many more clients in this year. In this moment, the **Covid situation** has become even worse than during the first 11 months. Gender based violence, which is one of the strong programs of the **Social Service department**, became an even greater problem in this time of quarantine & lock down. **Programs and home visits continued to deal with the ongoing issues.**

Our Region has lived this challenging time with a **desire to surrender all that God has been asking.** There is a great sense of gratitude for all we have been able to do among ourselves, and with those we serve. At times we have done well, at other times not so well, and then repeat!



2020 was an **unpredictable year**.

There is no room for "clichés", for rhetorical phrases.

Our "Mater Gratiae" Province also suffered from the death of three Sisters, each in particularly painful situations. The sorrow and fear for the loss of loved ones, and for the difficult situations of the missions, **increased the trust in the Sacred Heart of Jesus**.

In fact, many things came to light.

A **growth in personal and community prayer**, and it was noticed that each Missionary Sister better understood the meaning of "reparation" and "abandonment" to the providence and love of Jesus.

The **sense of "thanksgiving"** has grown for the protection we have given to our elderly Sisters and for the affectionate and faithful commitment of our lay collaborators.

## MATER GRATIAE PROVINCE

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Even in business, in work, in social and cultural activities, in families, **we are experiencing a new "creativity"** that makes us understand **how the Lord does not abandon anyone**, but rather gives the strength and intelligence to resume life in a new and perhaps better way.

Despite the "confinement" and "closure" of many activities, the Province has continued **to carry out charitable activities and religious celebrations**, important moments of local and provincial **formation, communication**, and maintenance work, including extraordinary maintenance in the communities and works.

Looking at our **works and missions**, we have seen the **great responsiveness of Sisters, laity, and lay people**.

The 2020 was an year of overcoming and gratitude for us in the face of the challenges of the pandemic that continues to cause deep wounds on all continents.

We, Sisters and Laity, in this time of uncertainty, experience **pain, faith and Christian hope for caring for personal, social and world life**.

Some of the **Fruits harvested in the year 2020**, between us MSC and Lay people, in carrying out the Cabrini mission: **COMPASSION. SOLIDARITY. CULTIVATION OF SPIRITUALITY, FAITH. HOPE, CHRISTIAN FRATERNITY, CARING FOR LIFE.**

## SANTA FRANCISCA CABRINI PROVINCE

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Celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mother Cabrini with the central theme **"A Heart that embraces everyone"** and with the participation of several sisters from the Institute.

Community study and reflection in plenary activity on the Path of Advent 2020 program in the province on the Encyclical Letter **"Fratelli Tutti"**.

Video with testimony of the **Sisters over 80 years** of age for the Institute's global website.

Provincial Assembly online and **"On the path of Advent"** program.

We strengthened our network and our partnership dimension, especially in **the Schools**, in the **Social Works**, in the activities of Popular, parochial, and diocesan **Pastoral**, at the **Madre Virginia Dispensary**, In the **Houses of Events and Retreats**, in the **Vocational Ministry**.



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