

## **EASTER GREETING**

"I am with you always."

This is our resurrection promise. It is five simple words yet deeply profound. We all go through times of challenge which may include health problems, letting go as we age, disabilities, or financial struggles. The world is riddled with problems like ecological issues, war, violence, terrorism, hunger, unemployment, and natural disasters. How do we find hope in the midst of so much chaos and suffering? We find it in the resurrection promise "I am with you always."

Knowing that God is with brings light in our darkness.

Knowing that God is with brings peace in the unknown chaos. Knowing that God is with brings faith in times of the unknown and unanswered questions.

Knowing that we are not alone brings consolation in times of loss and letting go.

What a great gift!

May our Risen Lord and Savior bring you light, peace, faith, and consolation as you continue on your daily journey discovering the ways that God is with you. May you experience the joy that Jesus has as he makes known his resurrection daily and as you discover the ways that Jesus is with in all circumstances of life.

The Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres wish you the Easter gifts of peace, joy and love that Jesus offers. Know that you are in our prayers





## **Sisters News**



Sr. Juliana will go for her home visit in Korea in May. She has not been home since 2003 and her father died recently. We wish her a safe trip and pray that her visit will be healing and refreshing.

Sr. Claire is celebrating her diamond jubilee this year at St. Christophers on May 16th. She will make a renewal in the Philippines in June. We thank Sr. Claire for her faithful commitment through the years.

Sr. Nenita just returned from Haiti and was deeply touched by the experience. You will hear from her in the next Newsletter and see some pictures.

Sr. Gloria and Sr. Francis will go to Haiti on the 24<sup>th</sup> to help our Sisters and offer support. We will also be looking for options for our Sisters from other countries to go to Haiti for longer periods of time to help with medical needs and pastoral care.

Sr. Martha is still in Vietnam with her younger brother who is seriously ill with cancer. She brought her parents and her father got sick and the doctor would not let him travel. Please keep her and her family in your prayers.

Sr. Cristina is hard at work helping with the archives and taking on many projects that I hand on to her. I am thankful to have her. (Sr. Gloria) She continues to adjust to our culture and the climate. The support of your prayers will help her along the way.

In honor of the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday of Sr. Rosalie Hughes, SPC, in March, we invite donations thoughout 2010 to purchase a Bishop Noa Home outdoor Nativity Set. Donations of \$60, multiples of \$60, or any amount that you can give are most welcome.





# 150th Anniversary in Saigon, Vietnam

By Sr. Gloria Schultz

On January 24, the Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres in Vietnam opened the celebration of their 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a spectacular program on the life of Mother Benjamin who helped the spread of our missionary work in Asian countries. The program consisted of a skit on the life of Mother Benjamin along with dance, song, and native dress that introduced us to many aspects of the culture



in Vietnam.

On January 25, 2010, which is the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul our Patron, all of the Provincial, District and Regional Superiors from around the world gathered in Saigon along with Mother Myriam, our Superior General, and her council to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Sisters of St. Paul in Saigon as well as the opening of the first novitiate outside of France. We joined with the Vietnamese Sisters, which includes the Junior Sisters, Novices, Postulants, and aspirants as well Sisters from the Province of Danang and the Province of Mytho on the Provincial grounds in Saigon for a mass for the celebration.

The celebration began with a procession outside. In the procession were two Sisters dressed in the first habit. There were many banners and each Provincial and Distirct Superior carried a flag from their country. This meant 34 different countries where the Sisters of St. Paul serve. It was impressive. It was a great celebration which touched our hearts. The Bishop of Vietnam concelebrated Mass with the Bishop of Chartres, who was the main celebrant. The mass was followed by a special meal.

How blessed we are that the presence of the Sisters in Vietnam has survived for 150 years since our Sisters have gone through many difficulties including two wars. Our Sisters in Vietnam continue to serve the poor through education and health care. May God who began the good work in them continue to bless and guide the Sisters of Vietnam.







## Ministries in Vietnam

By Sr. Gloria Schultz



the Sisters.

We had the privilege to travel to Mytho to get a taste of their province as well. Like the Sisters in Saigon, they are involved in the same ministries. The Sisters live deeply our charism serving the poor and trying to improve their lives. I found it enriching to see and experience the Vietnamese culture and was deeply touched by the dedication of the Sisters and their deep love for God.

During the war, the communist took many of our buildings including the schools. So after the fall of Saigon our Sisters continued to work with the poor especially the orphans including those who were handicapped. As time passed, they were allowed to open Pre-Schools and Kindergartens. Some of their buildings were given back in order for them to do this. They are not allowed to have any secondary schools. At present the main ministry among our Sisters is caring for orphans including those who are handicapped or deaf,

Our Congregation in Vietnam started in the north in Hanoi. Due to the war the Sisters in Hanoi went to Danang. The beginning of March we reopened a house in Hanoi in order to minister to the poor and those in need.

Pre-Schools and Kindergartens, as well as health clinics for the poor. The families pay if they can afford however many of the students are free. The same is true for health care. I can't tell you how impressed I was with the work that they do. If I could handle the language and the heat, I would love one day to help in one of the clinics as well as teach some English to





# The Philippines

From Vietnam we went to the Philippines on January 30th to taste the missionary spirit of our Sisters and to experience their culture as well as to hold the Council of Congregation. This was a historical moment since it was the first time the Council was held outside of Rome. We are thankful to Mother Myriam for her openness to the Holy Spirit and her yes that led us to the Philippines. Indeed we were able to expand our horizons.

We were privileged to be there on February 2<sup>nd</sup> when 35 Sisters renewed their vows at an early morning mass. It was the first time that I have seen such a large group of Sisters renewing their vows. The chapel was filled with Sisters and angelic voices sang praise to God.

At 10 a.m., we had another mass where 6 Sisters took their first vows and 6 Sisters made their final profession. It was particularly special because Mother Myriam Kitcharoen, our Superior General, was there to receive their vows. How great it was to be present to witness these young women giving their lives to God. There is no doubt that God continues to call. Let us pray that young women throughout the world will say "yes" to this call.

Family members and friends were present to witness this momentous moment and join in the celebration. After mass a delicious meal was enjoyed by all. It was a day of festivity and giving thanks to God.

We also had the privilege of visiting many of the ministry sights of our Sisters in the Philippines. At the schools the entire student body, the Sisters, and the faculty came out to greet us with cheers and flags. At the hospitals the Sisters and staff came to greet us. A necklace made of there national flower, coffee beans, and sea shells was placed on our neck. Flowers were also given to



Mother Myriam and her council so we headed straight to the chapel to offer the flowers to God and sing a magnificat. Besides touring the ministry site, we were given meals and entertained with their native dances and song. The beauty and messages in the song and dance entered our hearts. We are thankful for this rich taste of Filippino culture.

I was very impressed with the Zero Waste Program in many schools and hospitals in the Philippines. They take all of the garbage of the students and staff and put it to use. Some is made into compost. Some is used to make paper, soap, rope, candles, charcoal, or jewelry to name just a few things. The programs are run by the Sisters, faculty, and students.

By Sr. Gloria Schultz







## **Council of the Congregation**

By Sr. Gloria Schultz



So what is the Council of the Congregation? It is a gathering of all the Provincial, District and Regional Superiors from around the world along with Mother Myriam, our Superior General, and her council. This means that Sr. Mary Ann Laurin was in the group. We gather for this Council every six years and it is three years after the Chapter where we elect our Superior General and set the goals for the next six year. The Council evaluates to what extent we have carried out the goals of the Chapter and take steps to help ourselves as leaders as well as Sisters to further the process. The theme of the Council was "Following in the footsteps of St. Paul with renewed audacity. So the Council was opened with a ritual which celebrated our missionary spirit and internationality. We called on the help of the Holy Spirit to guide us and we put ourselves into the hands of our loving potter as we prepared to begin the actual work of the Council The opening day was followed by three days of recollection which included talks by Fr. Gerry Whelan, SJ, who is a theology Professor at the Gregorian University in Rome.

After the three days of talks and reflecting, he helped us in a process of continued reflection which included both small and large groups so that we could return home with a clear direction of our path for the next three years. Among our efforts will be plans for living deeper our Consecrated life and a deep look at our ministries for the poor. The work part of the Council ended with two days of talks and reflection by Cardinal Rosales who is

the Archbishop in Manila. He talked with passion and our hearts were touched as he challenged us to be deeply in love with God as we increase our presence among the poor. I found him to be a holy man who has really given his life in service to the poor. He is 80 years old and still filled with zeal for the mission. He is an example of following in the footsteps of St. Paul. What a gift to be in his presence and to sit at his feet.

The Council closed with time to recap our experience and to put all in the hands of God. The closing ritual expressed the deep bond between all of the Superiors. We left with hearts filled with gratitude and a great desire to share everything with our Sisters at home who supported us throughout with their prayer. We trust that the Spirit will lead and guide us as we continue to help to build the Kingdom of God.



# Spirit of Hospitality and Welcoming By Sr. Gloria Schultz

In both Vietnam and the Philippines we were warmly welcomed by our Sisters and every ministry site that we visited. The Sisters would line up to welcome us. At schools the children and staff lined up to welcome us. We were greeted by cheers and "Good morning Sister." At the hospitals and clinics it was the same. The Sisters and staff lined up to cheer and welcome us. We were assigned a Sister who was our angel. She catered to our every need and more. They cleaned our rooms, took care of our laundry, and help us to find our way around to name just a few of the things that they did.

When a Sister arrived in Vietnam, all of the postulants, novices, junior Sisters, and professed Sisters lined up on both sides of a large staircase. As the Sisters got out of the van, they were greeted with clapping and given flowers. As they ascended the steps, everyone greeted them and welcomed them. You, like me, may think that this could not be outdone. However, it happened in the Philippines. We were also greeted with bands, drummers, flags, people in beautiful Native dress. As great as all of this was, the little island of Dumaguete had the most spectacular welcome.

As we got off the plane we were greeted with a band, baton twirlers, and the ROTC. As we walked on the red carpet, the ROTC students formed an arch with their swords. Coming home something even more unbelievable happened. The band was at the convent to see us off. Several faculty were at the house to say good-bye. When we arrived at the airport, we discovered that it was not a final good-bye because now they were at the airport. The bus drove though a special gate and we did not have to enter the airport or go through security. We got off the bus close to our plane. The red carpet and ROTC were there. Once again we had a police escort from Manila airport to the Antipolo because of the traffic. We were really treated like celebrities or some high ranking official.





# We Give Thanks By Sr. Gloria Schultz

There is no way that I can share the whole experience on paper. No matter how much I write or talk, it would be impossible to share the riches that we gained from the experience in VietNam, the Philippines and the Council of the Congregation. My heart is filled with thanks to all those who made this experience a treasure to hold in my heart as well as a treasure that I will try to share. So I extend a gigantic thank you to all of the Sisters in Vietnam and in the Philippines for the depth of their sharing and their loving, friendly welcoming spirits. They have shared their rich cultures and as a result we share a bond that is deeper. We thank God for the unity that is ours and ask you to join us praying for more vocations to our Congregation so that our Congregation which has been in existence for 310 years will continue into the future.

# **History of the Philippines**

On October 20, 1904 seven of our Sisters set sail from Saigon for the Philippine Island of Dumaguete in the diocese of Iloilo. They were responding to the invitation of the American bishop, Monsignor Rooker, whose jurisdiction extended over 8 large islands, and 200 smaller ones with a population of over 1,400,00 people.

The story of over 100 years of the Philippine Province has all the flavor of an epic poem.

There beginnings were lowly and in total poverty. Add to that the daring venture of coming to this nation just after the defeat of the Spaniards when the Americans were seeking to impose their language as well as their authority. Only one of the Sisters knew how to speak English.

But the Sisters were spurred on by the great apostolic project: help the Philippine people to remain faithful to their Catholic faith.

Dumaguete, Vigan, Tuguegarao, Manila, Quezon City the St. Paul Colleges, then tiny swarms, today hives humming with activity. They now reach out to the poor to provide catechesis and education.

The hospital of Iloilo was founded on nothing but the strenuous work of the Sisters and the generosity of kind-hearted benefactors. Today many SPC hospitals serve the people of the Philippine Islands, especially the poor.

The Island of Culion saw the Sisters come as exiles to open their hearts to the 4,000 lepers who had been banished to its shores.

There was a Novitiate right from the start and it was amazing to see how the number of candidates steadily increased.

Then came the great hour of testing with the war of 1941-1945, bringing battles, ruins, endless fights, woeful efforts to escape from death. In spite of all, life continued to smolder. After 1946 the flame spread unimpeded.

Our Sisters serve in education, nursing, social, pastoral services, and ministry to the mountain tribes who have remained for too long on the margins of the life of the country. Human development and evangelization are the aim of the Sisters and a group of lay missionaries are their collaborators.

# **Short History of our Sisters in Vietnam**

Vietnam is a narrow trip of land shaped similar to the letter "S". It is located in southeastern extremity of the Indochina peninsula. Vietnam shares a border with China in the North and Laos and Cambodia in the West. It opens up towards the Orient Sea in the East and the Pacific Ocean in the South. Vietnam has a population of over 80 million people. It is the 13th most populated country in the world.

In 1859, Mother Benjamin, who was taking care of orphans in Hong Kong, received a letter from Bishop Lafebvre in Saigon asking for help. At that time Vietnam was at war so the living conditions were very hard. Despite this fact, Mother Benjamin sent 2 Sisters (Sr. Marie of the Nativity and Sister Saint Lizier) to Saigon in June of 1860. Their first work was to receive orphans and look after the sick. Mother Benjamin was the first superior of Saigon Province as well as the Indochina Superior. Despite the lack of furniture and food along with many other challenges, the two pioneer Sisters started receiving orphans immediately and they also took care of the sick. They worked night and day for the love of God to help the orphan children and the sick. The work load kept increasing so at the end of the year, more Sisters came from France to support them. Many of the Sisters did not live long due to the climate and the epidemics. In six months there were six Sisters who died.

The development of the mission went quickly due to the wars and persecution. In the North of the country, the Sisters were invited to serve the poor. In reply, in 1883 Mother Benjamin sent her Sisters to the North. After 8 years the number of Sisters increased so Hanoi Province was established in 1891. A Provincial House "Saint Mary" was provided and Mother Mary of the Conception Donian was the first superior. Up until 1937, she had trained 110 local Sisters who worked with 70 French Sisters in the mission.

In 1889, replying to Bishop Caspar's initiative, Saigon Province opened and orphanage and a clinic in Hue. The SPC mission continued to grow and flourish.

In 1954 the Geneva cease-fire agreements divided the country in two parts. This event caused damages to the Hanoi Province as well as the rest of the country. The number of Sisters increased in central Vietnam and Da Nang was legally established as a Province in 1960 while the Province of Hanoi no longer existed. The government didn't allow the Sisters to keep anything of value and the Sisters were obliged by the government to go to Hue so they had to start from the beginning again to help the orphans and the sick.

In 1964, the number of Sisters of Saigon Province surpassed 400. Mother Marie Paul and her assistants decided to establish a new province. On March 7, 1964 the Province of Mytho was established. They started with 131 Sisters. They too worked with the poor and sick.

Today the Saigon province consists of 36 communities with 400 Sisters working in 5 diocese. Da Nang Province consists of 5 communities with 469 Sisters working in 11 diocese. Mytho Province consists of 24 communities with 165 sisters working in the diocese in the South.



# <u>Sisters in the Philippines/Vietnam</u> who lived in the US:

**Sr. Felicienne** is from the Province of Saigon. She is helping to take care of the house where our Sisters have a home for handicapped orphans. We were delighted to see one another. "Never did I expect to see Sr. Gloria and Sr. Mary Ann in my country!" she exclaimed. While the time together was short, we savored every moment. Sr. Felicienne stills misses Marquette and all the people that she knows. She carries everyone in her heart and prayers.



Dear Sr. Gloria and Sr. Mary Ann,

First of all, I thank God, for giving me the occasion to see Sr. Gloria and Sr. Mary Ann in Saigon.

I met Sr. Gloria first in my community. She waited for me in the lovely Oratory. I thank God who gave me an appointment to meet together here. "Hello! Sr. Gloria." She turned back and looked at me with joy and surprise!

Never, did I think Sr. Gloria would come to see me here. My community is far from the Provincial House—around 5 miles. I was supposed to see her there, but today she came to meet me.

Thank God I have a big surprise and a big gift today. January 2010, Sr. Felicienne.

#### Sr. Victoire de Jesus Majaroon

"From the US mission in 1989, I was assigned in Notre Dame de Lourdes Hospical in Baguio City. There I worked in the Pastoral Care Department for a few months. Later on I was assigned to take charge of the Dietary Department until the closure of the Hospital in 1992 due to the earthquake destruction.

From Baguio I was transferred to Manila in the University of Santo Tomas Hospital. There I worked as a nursing supervisor in charge of seven nursing units.



In 1995 I was transferred to Perpetual Succour Hospital, Cebu City where I work up to the present. I am a nursing supervisor of the nursing floors. My function is three-fold: administrative, clinical, and pastoral. I make my rounds in the nursing units to visit the patients, oversee care, and provision for a healing environment for the patients. I also take charge of the Basic Ecclessial Community (BEC) program for the staff and personnel of my assigned units."

We miss you Sr. Vic—you are in our prayers.



age 12 Easter 2010

## Sisters in the Philippines/Vietnam who lived in the US:

**Sr. Lucienne** resides in Antipolo in the Provincial House. She is teaching English to the young Sisters who love her and appreciate all that she is doing for them. Since our meetings were in Antipolo, I was able to see Sr. Lucienne several times. We talked of the "good old days" in the U.S. District. She sends love and prayers to all of her friends. Hopefully we will be able to arrange a visit to the U.S. for Sr. Lucienne.





SR. SEVERIANA ROSALIA PASCUAL is presently assigned to St. Paul University Quezon City. As a pastoral minister, she conducts seminars, counseling and spiritual direction and is the local coordinator for the Friends of St. Paul. She added much to our life at Nativity Parish in Washington, D.C. when she was on her renewal at Washington Theological Union. It was good to see Sr. Sev and chat. May God Bless her and her ministry.

SR.MARY LUCILLA OF JESUS PERPINAN has been in Perpetual Succour Hospital, Cebu City for a number of years now. At present, she manages the Cancer Institute at our hospital in Cebu, which she helped set up and did an excellent job. We still miss her at the Bishop Noa Home where she was a nurse. We are thankful for all the good she does in her ministry.





In the Philippines many asked about Sr. Anne Patrice Cahill as she was their novice mistress. She served in the Philippines for 30 years. Thank you Sr. Patrice for touching so many hearts and lives.

# **JOURNEY IN HAITI**

by Sr. Rosaline Charoenchantavit, SPC

This is a brief eyewitness account of the aftermath of the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti on Jan. 12, 2010.

The accompanying photos speak more eloquently than words.

#### Tuesday, February 2, 2010

Sr. Mary Ann Elizabeth Cruz, SPC from San Francisco, Erika Hoenke, RN from Detroit, and I met at the Miami, Florida Airport at 10 p.m. We did not know one another but we had a common purpose: to help the Haitian people in their urgent need.

When I left Marquette with 5 big valises, filled mostly with surgical and medical supplies donated by the people in Marquette, I was not sure that American Airlines would allow them all on board. But after informing them that I was on my way to Haiti and the contents of the valises were for the people there, they gladly let the baggage go through.

At the Miami Airport, we met the team of doctors, nurses, and volunteers from different states of the USA and other countries, numbering around 60. No commercial flights are allowed to enter Haiti, so we flew together via Vision Airlines, the plane used by the United Nations (UN) personnel and the United States (US) military.

Leaving Miami at 10:00 p.m., we arrived at the airport of Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, at I a.m. the following day. We were met by darkness and only the headlights strapped around our foreheads helped us to see our way as we personally transferred our baggage from the plane to the truck that would bring us to the camp—actually, composed of several big tents used by the medical team of the University of Miami. Although it was all dark, we felt that the roads were rough and we saw how dusty it was. The feelings we had were akin to entering a battlefield, as we passed the UN military personnel and their tanks, with big guns in tow, along the way.







#### Journey in Haiti (cont.)

Upon arrival at the camp an hour later, we had a short orientation by the officer-in-charge. We were told to take our rest so as to be ready at 7:30 a.m. for duty. Sr. Mary Ann was assigned to the tent for adults, while Sr. Rosaline and Erika were to report to the Emergency Room. Our duty began at 8 a.m. and could last till past midnight.

Some cases that met us:

A newborn baby whose mother died in the rubble.

An orphaned boy covered in dust with a big wound on his right foot.

People with broken legs, broken arms, back, etc.

Malnutrition and infectious wounds.





After two days, a laboratory was set up. The donated medicines were still in boxes. Whenever we needed medicines or supplies, we had to rush to the supply tent and scrounge around for what we needed. There was no order at all.

One of the main problems was language. The doctors and the nurses could not work well without interpreters.

The scorching heat (about  $90^{\circ}$  F or  $34^{\circ}$  C) and the swirling dust all day were challenges to the stamina and dedication of the doctors, nurses and volunteers. They had to continue treating patients, many of them life-and-death cases. Each day around 90-130 patients were admitted in the adult, pediatric, and ICU tents. The operating room was open 24 hours a day.

It is not enough to give first aid to these people. Eventually, they have to contend with Tuberculosis, diarrhea, malaria, dengue fever, scabies, and perhaps other diseases.









#### SUNDAY, February 7, 2010

We visited our Sisters at the District House in Delmas, where we were warmly welcomed by Sr. Therese Yvonne Florent, the District Superior, and her community of five. The Sisters also live in tents in the front garden, alongside the people in the neighborhood. The District House is closed with an armed security guard all day to help prevent looting.

We attended Mass with the Sisters at the Church of St. Vincent de Paul, which lasted for two hours. The church was filled to overflowing. There was a lot of singing led by the choir trained by Sister Ma. Teresa Quiapos, the other Filipina missionary in Haiti.

We visited the school run by our Sisters. The Sisters' house was not livable by obvious damage as seen by the major cracks on the walls. So, at night the Sisters sleep in tents outside, to ensure their safety.

We had lunch in another community of our Sisters, where Sr. Jeanne Maurice Boin is the superior.

This half-day break gave us renewed energy to return to our work for the afternoon in ministering to those who needed us.





Thursday, February 11, 2010

February I I<sup>th</sup> was designated as a National Day of Prayer. No patient came to the hospital tent because the people observed the day to pray, in places of their own choice. This gave us the opportunity to view the city, riding on the truck used for transporting victims.







#### Journey in Haiti

#### Friday, February 12, 2010

Working till the last, Sr. Mary Ann and Sr. Rosaline went on their usual duty in the morning. The afternoon was spent packing; then they went around the tents to bid goodbye. They were met with surprise, because it was the first time that their co-workers and patients saw them in their religious habits.







We hope that this sharing may
open our eyes,
open our hearts,
open our hands-that, united in one love in Christ,
we may bring hope to the Haitian people,
like light shining through the darkness.

#### Notes:

Sr. Rosaline Charoenchantavit is a Thai SPC Sister in the District of USA, presently assigned in Marquette, Michigan.

Sr. Mary Ann Elizabeth Cruz is a Filipina SPC Sister in the District of Haiti, presently assigned in Oriani.

Erika Hoenke is a registered nurse who plans to enter medical school in August 2010.



# **Compassionate Heart Club**

Due to the disaster in Haiti the money collected for Haiti was sent to Haiti to take care of their basic needs. We were able to give \$6000.00 thanks to the generosity of all who donated through the Compassionate Hearts Club and those who had donated for Haiti relief through word of mouth.

Listed are the donors to the Com-

passionate Hearts Club since our

last newsletter.

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# A Heartfelt Thank you to everyone who generously gave gifts and donations since the last newsletter.

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A special thank you to everyone who donated toward the relief efforts for the Philippines and Haiti.



You may write or email Sr. Gloria Schultz at:

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