

# International Newsletter

*Adorers of the Blood of Christ*



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## The Heavens

Wherever we are, wherever we live, we dwell under the same sky. During the day, when we look up at it, we see it as blue, or gray from rain or pollution. At night, however, the situation changes, depending on where we are. If we live in a city or a town, we'll probably be able to spot a few stars here and there. If, on the other hand, we live in the countryside or in an area with few artificial lights, we should be able to see many more stars. Yet it is the same sky where days and nights, mornings and evenings, alternate. Some time ago, I was given a candy, one of those with a little note inside that usually has romantic phrases written on it. To my great surprise, the message I received read, *'I know nothing for certain, but the sight of the stars makes me dream.'* This phrase was written by Vincent Van Gogh to his brother Theo, to whom he was very close, reflecting on the fact that, although he did not know the future or the deeper meaning of life, the beauty of the night sky offered him comfort and inspiration. In some way, the sky is a constant. It gives us security. We know we will always find it in its place, towering majestically and infinitely above us. From childhood, we are taught that it is God's dwelling place, that Jesus ascended into heaven, that Mary was assumed into heaven, and that our loved ones join it once they leave this earth. Psalm 19 proclaims that *the heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.* Unfortunately, these days the sky in many countries has become threatening, because it is streaked with missiles that tear through its beauty and terrify those who no longer feel safe beneath its firmament. From an inspirer of dreams, it has been transformed into a nightmare. From a proclaimer of God's glory, it has been turned into a mere space from which destruction and death rain down. From a herald of God's work, it has been reduced to a vehicle of violence and oppression. If human beings are denied even the simple freedom to look up without fear, what remains for them? If the sky becomes a threat, where can they turn their gaze? Let us continue to turn our eyes to God and pray for peace, hoping and believing that the words of Psalm 85 will one day come true: *Mercy and truth shall meet; righteousness and peace shall kiss. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.* Amen.

*Sr. Barbara Perali, ASC*

Editorial

## Table of Contents

### Editorial

♦ The Heavens

### From the ASC World

♦ St. Maria De Mattias Day

♦ Catching up with Sister Hien Vu

♦ A Church Within a Church

♦ Jeevadhan Home of Love: A Place of Healing and Hope

♦ Finding Richness

♦ Sister Emma Zordan

♦ Stories of "Strong Women In Difficult Times" 8

1 ♦ Immersed in the Blood of Christ – Sent to Bear Witness 9

♦ Blessing of the Marriage and Family Counseling Center in Vukovar 10

2 ♦ Novena to St. Maria De Mattias 12

### CIS Space

3 ♦ The Beatitudes: Blueprint of Holiness and Mirror of Jesus 13

### In the Congregation

5 ♦ Birthdays: Let's Celebrate Life 15

7 ♦ They Have Returned to their Heavenly Home 15

**St. Maria De Mattias Day**  
*Maria De Mattias Elementary School*



Maria De Mattias Day is celebrated annually on March 4 to commemorate the founding of the Congregation of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ and to honor the patron saint of Maria De Mattias Elementary School. This year, 2026, the celebration at the Maria De Mattias Primary School in Dodoma, Tanzania, was attended by the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, staff, students, and a guest of honor, Father Felix Mushobozi, CPPS, who presided over Holy Mass.

In his homily, Father Mushobozi highlighted three main aspects.

First, courage: he stated that children must be courageous in their studies; their families must be courageous in educating them and also in facing and resolving the various difficulties within the family and society, following the example of St. Maria De Mattias.

Second, love: Father Mushobozi highlighted that St. Maria De Mattias was filled with so much love that she founded the Congregation of the Adorers and schools to help those most in need, both materially and spiritually. We, too, are therefore invited today to live authentic love among ourselves.

Third, holiness: he urged the students that to attain the holiness lived by St. Maria De Mattias, it is necessary to abandon negative behaviors such as stealing, lying, and speaking ill of others, and instead become people of prayer and humility before God, like her.

The celebration of St. Maria De Mattias was enriched by various games and activities, including the traditional Kihaya dance, a reading of the story of St. Maria De Mattias, a game where workers chase chickens, blowing up and popping balloons, a ring-toss game using soda bottles, and a soccer match between students and workers, as well as a netball game between workers and students.

We thank God for the gift of Maria De Mattias, founder of the Congregation and patroness of our school. We continue to pray, through her intercession, that we may persevere in the gifts of Faith, Hope, and Charity.

*Sr. Eva Thobias Mafumbi, ASC*



### ***Catching up with Sister Hien Vu***



In early December, Sr. Hien Vu arrived in the United States for a three-month visit. Soon after her arrival, she was able to attend the final vows of Sr. Sarah Harbaugh, and since then has started visiting other sisters across the country. On her trip, she also hopes to learn about the history of the ASCs in the US Region.

Prior to going back to Vietnam, she also plans to attend a 30-day retreat in California as she prepares for final vows. Sister Hien Vu grew up in Ninh Binh, near Hanoi in the north area of Vietnam. She currently works as a pharmacy tech, and this is what she plans to do for her ministry.

From 2015-2020, Sr. Hien Vu was a candidate and lived in Korea and learned Korean during that time. In 2020, she opened the Mission in Vietnam and took her first vows in Vietnam on July 1, 2020. "I want to learn something new," she said. "And to do my mission in a faraway place." The first member of the ASCs that she met was Sr. Hien Tran, in the community at Thai Binh, in the northern part of Vietnam, from 2020-2025. While there, she also went to pharmacy school, helped with boarding students there, and assisted in the church as well. At the church, she taught children, worked in music, played piano for Mass, cleaned the sanctuary, assisted the altar servers, taught catechism, and accompanied children and parish groups in activities.

Sister Hien Vu also helped to support the pro-life group where she assisted in burying miscarried babies and visiting the elderly in church.

We all hope her visit continues to be wonderful!

***Jeff Stahlhut***  
*Regional Director of Communications*

### ***A Church Within a Church***

February 2026 marks the eighth year that St. Vincent's Parish in St. Louis began its outreach, now fondly referred to as simply "Suds." The core group of volunteers has formed a small church within the parish church. Working well together, we enjoy each other's company even when things get hectic in the laundromat. We now know our regular guests by first name - the stressed-out moms with lots of kids' clothes, the unhoused, and the lonely folks of all ages who often come for companionship in addition to clean clothes.

Wash Studio, the laundromat in the Souldard neighborhood, is now owned and has been upgraded by Reggie Swanigan, who has been most welcoming and generous to us. He has solicited laundry pods from his friends to help us with our expenses. Alex, who owns the Bake and Boiled Bagels shop right across the street, brings bagels, cream cheese, and coffee for the volunteers and guests. The parish and many contributors, like our Charitable Giving Committee and individual sisters, have generously helped fund the program. Laundromats and laundry supplies are expensive. In addition to the volunteers, many people make this service possible for people who truly appreciate our outreach.

So twice a month, once during the morning and once in late afternoon, the laundromat becomes a place of prayer and service; it is its own church within a church with ministers, congregation, fellowship, and the music of sloshing washers and spinning dryers.

***Sr. Regina Siegfried, ASC***

## ***Jeevadhan Home of Love: a Place of Healing and Hope***

Jeevadhan Home of Love was established on 25 September 2019 by the Sisters Adorers of the Blood of Christ and is located at Arampilly, Thrissur, Kerala, India. Jeevadhan continues to work with a clear focus on its guiding vision, mission, and motto, offering care, protection, and support to those in need. Jeevadhan stands firm on its **Vision, Mission, and Motto**. Its vision is to build a just society based on *justice, love, and human dignity*. Its mission is *to empower the marginalized and include the excluded*, and its motto inspires everyone to *"Give the best to the least, protect and promote life."*



Sr. Rani Padayattil is the Director of Jeevadhan Destitute Home for Women, working in collaboration with Sr. Valsa Mammootil and Sr. Jyothi Nallamothu. The team also includes one Social work counsellor Ms. Meghana Joseph and three supporting staff members. Together, the team works with dedication and compassion to ensure the well-being and dignity of every individual under their care.

Jeevadhan destitute home for women in Arampilly is more than a shelter home it is a place of healing and hope for women who have been abandoned or homeless or facing mental health issues.

The home focuses on a holistic approach to care ensuring every resident feels valued and supported through a variety of daily activities designed to develop both the body and mind. The journey towards wellness at Jeevadhan begins with consistent medical attention and emotional support. Monthly health checkups are a priority. Every month the doctors from Amala medical college hospital visit the residents of Jeevadhan and monitor the health conditions of the women. Along with medical support, counseling also provides for the residents to build emotional strength to overcome past trauma faced in their life and to support the emotional and mental well-being of the residents. Jeevadhan encourages mental stimulation and creativity, as a part of that, residents take part in **activities such as colouring, learning basic alphabets, and craft work**. Physical health and personal discipline were promoted through **recreational activities** including gardening, regular evening walks, and simple exercises. Also spiritual nourishment continues to be an integral part of daily life of the residents as some of them participate in the **daily rosary, adoration, and the collective participation in the Holy Mass**, which offer comfort, strength, and a sense of peace.

Cleanliness, order, and overall care are experienced within the Home.

To encourage a supportive and family-like environment, monthly meetings are held regularly. These meetings give residents a safe space to share their concerns, needs, and suggestions. Their views and feelings are always listened to and respected. Along with that, social activities for the residence are planned to encourage social connection and emotional well-being. Major festivals such as Onam and Christmas are celebrated with joy and active participation. National days like Independence Day and Republic Day are observed in a respectful manner. Important personal and spiritual occasions, including Mother Teresa's Day, the Congregation Feast, and the birthdays of residents and Sisters, are also celebrated and bring happiness to the residents. This



joy is further enhanced by generous visitors who choose to celebrate their personal milestones—such as weddings, birthdays, death anniversaries, and jubilees—at the Home. These celebrations help residents experience moments of happiness and provide emotional relief from long-term pain and depression. To keep every resident healthy and active Jeevadhan encourages the women to participate in daily exercises which help them to maintain physical mobility. Also social connection and creative expression are the heart of the home vibrant atmosphere. Group discussions are held regularly which encourage the women to share their thoughts with one another and to build a meaningful friendship with one another. In addition, slicing vegetable is another meaningful part of daily life at Jeevadhan. This activity serves as a form of functional therapy for the women, allowing them to contribute to the household which make them feel productive and it provides a place for casual conversation and increase bonding with other residents.

**At Jeevadhan every activity is a step towards a happy and meaningful life of the residents. Today, Jeevadhan is more than just a shelter—it is a true home filled with love, care, and compassion. Every activity here is a step towards healing, restoring dignity, and helping each resident live a happy and meaningful life. Jeevadhan Home of Love continues to shine as a beacon of hope, where broken lives are gently healed with love.**



*Sr. Rani Padayattil, ASC  
Director of the Center*

### ***Finding Richness***

*Online Get-Together of Aspirants of the-India Region*

On **15th February 2025 at 2:00 pm**, we, the aspirants of the Indian Region of our congregation, joyfully gathered for an online get-together organized by our formation team. Though physically separated by distance, we experienced a deep sense of unity and belonging through this virtual meeting.

We, the first-year aspirants, come from three different places of India:

- **Bangalore** – 7 Aspirants
- **Indonesia** – 3 Aspirants
- **Nongstoin, Northeast of India** – 4 Aspirants

We have been in the aspirancy for about 9 months, and this was a special opportunity for us to connect with one another beyond our local communities. The main purpose of this online gathering was to foster unity, mutual understanding, and interaction among us, coming from diverse geographical regions and cultural backgrounds.

### **A Prayerful Beginning**

The meeting began in a serene and prayerful atmosphere. We, the aspirants from Bangalore, invoked the presence of the Holy Spirit through a meaningful hymn. This beautiful invocation helped us to recollect ourselves and set a spiritual tone for the entire gathering. We truly felt that the Spirit of God was uniting us as one formation family.

Sr. Silvia Guthala ASC, the formation director of the aspirants at Nongstoin, warmly welcomed all of us. She expressed her joy in seeing aspirants from different regions come together despite cultural and geographical distances. Her words made us feel encouraged and valued.

Although Sr. Rojamani Ete ASC, the formation director of aspirants at Bangalore, could not be present due to unavoidable reasons, we felt her spiritual support and closeness.

We were deeply inspired by the encouraging message of Sr. Mini Vadakumpadan, the formation director of aspirants in Indonesia. She motivated us to remain faithful and committed to our formation journey. She reminded us to make good use of every opportunity for learning and growth and to recognize diversity as a precious gift from God. Her words strengthened our sense of belonging to one congregation and inspired us to grow together in unity.

### **Sharing, Learning, and Celebrating Diversity**

One of the most joyful parts of the meeting was the self-introduction session. Each one of us introduced ourselves and shared about our daily timetable, formation schedule, prayer life, studies, and community activities. We also spoke about our local culture, traditional food, and climatic conditions.

The interaction was lively and filled with laughter. As we communicated in our “broken English,” we felt no hesitation or fear. Instead, it created a friendly, relaxed, and joyful atmosphere. We realized that language was not a barrier; rather, it became a bridge that connected our hearts. This experience helped us build stronger bonds of friendship and sisterhood.

As part of our cultural exchange, each community presented a song in its own language. This was a beautiful expression of unity in diversity. Through these songs, we felt proud of our unique cultural identities while also experiencing the richness of belonging to one common congregation.

For many of us, this was a new and exciting experience. We expressed our happiness and gratitude for being able to connect beyond boundaries and distances.

### **A Grateful Conclusion**

The vote of thanks was proposed by us, the aspirants from Nongstoin. We sincerely expressed our gratitude to the Formation Team, the Sisters, and all the participants who made this meeting meaningful and memorable.

The gathering concluded on a prayerful note with a hymn to Mother Mary. We entrusted ourselves, our communities, and our entire formation journey to her loving care and protection.

### **Overall Experience**

This online get-together was truly a fruitful and enriching experience for all of us. It strengthened our unity, deepened our understanding of one another, and filled our hearts with joy. We are grateful for the opportunity to grow together as one formation family.

Above all, we feel proud and blessed to belong to our worldwide congregation, the Adorers of the Blood of Christ.

*Aspirants, India Region*

### **Sister Emma Zordan, ASC**



Among the thirty-one people to whom the President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, awarded the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic for their civic engagement, their “dedication to the common good” and “their witness to republican values,” there is also a religious woman we know well: our own Sister Emma Zordan, the dynamic member of the Congregation of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ who, at 84 years old, has been traveling every Saturday for the past 12 years from Latina to the Rebibbia Prison, where she holds her creative writing workshop with the inmates of the Roman penitentiary.

At noon on March 3 at the Quirinale, she was awarded an honor as significant as it was unexpected: “Commander of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic,” with the citation: *“For her dedicated efforts to improve the living conditions and reintegration prospects of prisoners.”*

This recognition was awarded, therefore, specifically for her volunteer work at Rebibbia, where she organizes writing workshops and literary contests “to foster and enhance the inmates’ ability to express themselves.” We know that the time she spends every Saturday morning in “confinement” is more than just a demanding writing workshop: it is a space of freedom and welcome that uplifts and offers listening, attention, and affection to the inmates. It helps them face the harshness of incarceration and reconnect with the threads of their broken lives, regain dignity, seek forgiveness, and look to the future with hope, despite the inhumanity of prison. It is a commitment that does not stop within the prison walls, but which Sister Emma continues outside, in her relationship with the inmates’ relatives, following and supporting those who have been released from prison. But also by helping those on the outside to free themselves from prejudices and preconceptions, opening their eyes and hearts to the reality of prison. The tool she uses is the presentation of the books she edits each year, at the conclusion of the creative writing workshop, collecting testimonies from inmates and thus giving them a voice. There are meetings held in parishes, schools, and bookstores that help raise awareness of the reality of life behind bars and the humanity of those who live in confinement.

Because of her dual commitment—both inside and outside the prison—Sister Emma has received numerous messages of congratulations, such is the esteem in which she is held by those who have known and appreciated her as a teacher and formator, or who have met her in prison as inmates or volunteers. Particularly significant is the message from the Regional Superior of her Congregation, Sister Milena Marangoni. “We were delighted to learn,” writes the superior, “of the distinguished title of Commander of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic that was conferred upon you by the Head of State, President Sergio Mattarella, for your commitment to improving the living conditions of inmates and giving them the opportunity to reintegrate into society.” “It is an act,” she observes, “that rewards your tireless and passionate work on behalf of people living in extremely precarious conditions in our prisons, as evidenced by the numerous suicides that occur there. It is an event,” the nun concludes, “that honors not only you but the entire Congregation to which you belong and, above all, our Region. We thank you, Sister Emma, for showing us that there is no age limit to dedicating our lives to the least among us, and we wish you continued energy and love in this ministry, which is so urgent today.”

While the Head of State’s recognition has presented the public with positive examples to follow, Sister Emma’s award honors not only her but also the dedication of the many volunteers—particularly religious women sisters—who, with humility, discretion, and generosity, devote themselves to the prison population.

Precisely for this reason, the phone call from the Quirinale came unexpectedly and surprised Sister Emma. But it also confirmed President Mattarella's great sensitivity toward the reality of prison life and his concern for the inhumane conditions in which inmates live. This recognition has strengthened the volunteers' bond with the person who most fully represents democratic institutions and safeguards our Constitution. This high honor certainly does not change Sister Emma's life or her commitment, but perhaps it compensates her for the many hardships, misunderstandings, and sufferings that—like the inmates—the volunteers also endure while working in the prison. Now, perhaps with even greater strength and determination, Sister Emma Zordan, Commander of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic, will walk through the security gates of Rebibbia to meet her friends, the inmates—who are surely happy and proud of this recognition, which extends beyond Sister Emma to embrace all her sisters who dedicate their lives to serving prisoners in Italian prisons. It is an extraordinary and essential service of compassion and humanity that the Quirinale has brought to the nation's attention.

*Roberto Monteforte*

### **Stories of "Strong Women In Difficult Times"**

*International Women's Day, March 8, 2026 – "Sul Monte" Spirituality Center*



In Castelplano, International Women's Day was a wonderful experience celebrating resilience. Indeed, despite the challenges they each faced, the Spirituality Center, the Pro Loco (a grass-roots organization of the town), and the municipal administration came together. In the face of the mistrust that, like a virus, is spreading in these times, the richness of the stories shared prevailed. A book served as a guide, written by Sr. Anna Maria Vissani: *I Give You a Little of My Strength. Portraits of Women in the 20th Century* (Prospettive editrice, 2020). A play was created under this title: **Strong Women in Difficult Times**. The women featured and profiled in the book are from the town and its surroundings—all women from the Marche region. The narratives touched on the fundamental aspects of life as lived by women in the 20th century, even during wartime: family, social life, work, leisure, education, religious upbringing, war, and so on.

They drew strength from within (resilience, in fact)—that is, the ability to transform pain into a resource, poverty into wealth, submission into harmony within a couple's relationship, hard work into the ability to support a family, and the strict religious upbringing received from the Church into fidelity to the great values of marriage and moral conduct. It is true that today the world has changed, and significantly so, but as we listened to them, we felt great respect and warmth—we might even say awe. In the end, these elderly women, who would be over 100 years old today, were serene and lived their daily lives with enthusiasm, even in the face of sacrifice. The photos from the book—black-and-white shots taken by a friend of ours in the 1990s—were projected on video: women recognized by their children and grandchildren, who were moved to see them captured in the spontaneity of someone who knew how to photograph without staged poses. The audience was also captivated by songs from the 1950s, such as "Mamma son tanto felice" (Mama, I'm so happy) and others, sung by everyone and led by Celeste Rago. What was also wonderful is that the entire event took place in a hall at the "Granchio Nero" community center and concluded with an aperitif featuring traditional dishes, such as beans with pork rinds, polenta flatbread, canapés with vegetables and sausage, cheese pizza, etc.... "Thank you to the resilient grandmothers, thank you to the women, thank you to everyone," as the town's mayor emphasized!

*Sr. Anna Maria Vissani, ASC*

## **Immersed in the Blood of Christ – Sent to Bear Witness**

It seems we could not have wished for anything more beautiful on the feast day of Saint Maria De Mattias. Maria De Mattias—Woman of the Word—together with those who proclaim the Good News every day (the catechists) and with us, the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, we celebrated a communal Eucharistic celebration, thanking God for the gift of our Foundress, for her charism, and for the spirituality of the ASC Congregation.

From February 2 to 4, 2026, a group of catechists from the Diocese of Legnica attended a retreat at our motherhouse in Bolesławiec. The theme of the retreat was: “Immersed in the Blood of Christ – Sent to Bear Witness.” The retreat was led by two priests from the Catechetical Office of Legnica. During these spiritual exercises, many topics were addressed: vocation and the search for strength to live in Christ, being witnesses to Gospel values, and the presence among children and young people to whom catechists transmit not only knowledge but also faith. In today’s secularized world, it is difficult to proclaim the truth about God to young people; for this reason, authenticity, a life consistent with these values, and true faith are necessary. The catechists greatly appreciate these moments of spiritual exercises and retreats, which help them to be strengthened so as not to doubt their vocation, and they expressed deep gratitude for the time and place where they had this experience.

During Holy Mass on the feast day of the Saint, we heard beautiful and moving words about Maria De Mattias: *“Saint Maria De Mattias is not merely a patroness in a portrait for us; she is the Apostle of love and reconciliation, who shows us how evangelization and catechize beginning with a personal sense of wonder at the price of our redemption, at the Blood of Christ (...) She says to each of us: We must not waste time. The world needs hope more than ever. The world needs peace more than ever, and you carry this hope in earthen vessels, yet filled with the Precious Blood (...) Dear Sisters, your vocation today is to be a living Monstrance (...) Adoration of the Blood of Christ is not just kneeling in the chapel, but it is also seeing this Blood in the wounds of the contemporary world, in lost young people, in families in crisis, in every person who comes here, in those who are confused and doubtful—and today these people are increasingly numerous. (...) Maria De Mattias understood that love has a concrete color and a concrete price. It is the color of the Blood of Christ. You are worth the Blood of Christ: this is what we must convey, and this is how we must look upon others. (...) She became a great reformer not because she had a brilliant educational plan (...) she became a great reformer because she did everything out of love and with love; she did everything for humanity, but above all for the Lord God; she was a great reformer because she loved. Her life changed when she stopped looking at herself in the mirror of her own selfishness and began to gaze upon the face of the Crucified One”*

It is impossible to describe the beauty of the retreat and the richness of the messages for which the catechists expressed their gratitude, confident that they will bear the fruits of a living faith.

We give thanks for the example of St. Maria De Mattias, who based her wisdom and pedagogy of life on Jesus Crucified, bringing this great love to others. May Maria De Mattias kindle zeal and passion in our hearts, so that we may be true missionary disciples.

**Sr. Ewa Kleps, ASC**



## **Blessing of the Marriage and Family Counseling Center in Vukovar**

On Monday, January 26, 2026, a ceremony was held for the blessing of the Marriage and Family Counseling Center of the Archdiocese of Đakovo-Osijek in Vukovar, which began its work on January 1, 2026. Employed at the center is Sr. Ljubica Radovac, M.Sc., a social worker and social pedagogue, currently undergoing training at the School of Cybernetics and Systemic Therapy. The counseling center in Vukovar is the result of several years of negotiations between the Archdiocese and the City of Vukovar (since 2021). Ultimately, on December 22, 2025, an Agreement on Mutual Rights and Obligations was signed establishing the Marriage and Family Counseling Center. The signatories were Archbishop Đuro Hranić, Mr. Marijan Pavliček, Mayor of Vukovar, and Associate Professor Fr. Josip Bošnjaković, PhD, the professional director of the counseling service within the Archdiocese. In 2025, the community of the Sisters Adorers of the Blood of Christ, Zagreb Region, of which Sr. Ljubica is a member, also became involved in the implementation.



With warm words of welcome, Sr. Ljubica opened the ceremony by greeting Auxiliary Bishop Ivan Ćurić, who presided over the celebration; the Mayor of Vukovar, Marijan Pavliček; Sr. Matija Pavić, Regional Superior of the Sisters Adorers of the Blood of Christ with the members of her council; as well as the other sisters present. She also greeted the head of the Department for Social Affairs of the City of Vukovar, Josip Paloš; representatives of the Franciscan fraternity in Vukovar, Fr. Mijo Tikvić and Fr. Vjerman Lazić; the other priests present; representatives of city offices, social institutions and associations, especially associations arising from the Homeland War, representatives of the media, and individual believers, friends and supporters of the Counseling Center.

The counseling center is an expression of our civic and faith commitment; it reflects the pastoral closeness of the Church to all individuals and families who face crises, difficulties, and the challenges of modern life, Sr. Ljubica emphasized. She added that this commitment and closeness will be shown through the work of the center by providing psychological and spiritual support, counseling, psychotherapy, and by working on prevention and education.

Afterwards, Associate Professor Fr. Josip Bošnjaković, PhD, professional director of the counseling service in the Archdiocese, addressed those present, expressing his joy at the blessing and establishment of the counseling center in Vukovar. With this, he said, a new path has begun, a synodal path, a shared journey with all the citizens and believers of the city of Vukovar and beyond. In his greeting he referred to the words of the Gospel: "When Jesus heard that John had been handed over, he withdrew to Galilee," explaining why Jesus began His ministry at that moment, because John had been handed over and the people no longer had a prophet. "Jesus, our God, who always takes the initiative in relation to us, recognizes people's needs and responds where there is need. I hope and believe that the opening of the Marriage and Family Counseling Center in Vukovar is also a response of our local Church to the recognized needs of citizens and believers, and that we may respond to this need professionally and with dedication, naturally alongside the already existing services in the city and county that place themselves at the service of people every day. Together with others we want to learn day by day how to build, in the best possible way, a society in which individuals, married couples, families, and all others can live with a sense of well-being and peace, experiencing the fruits of the Sermon on the Mount and the spirit of the Beatitudes," Fr. Bošnjaković said. He emphasized that through 23 years of experience working in counseling centers, various insights, needs, and forms of cooperation have been gained. He expressed the wish that in Vukovar

as well there will be cooperation with different psychosocial, health, legal, educational, and other institutions—always in service to users, clients, and patients, ultimately to those seeking God, but also to all who seek the type of help that the center can provide.

In the work of the counseling center, cooperation with parish priests is extremely important, Fr. Bošnjaković noted, thanking the Franciscan brothers in Vukovar, as well as the dean of the Vukovar deanery, Fr. Zvonimir Martinović, and the other priests for their collaboration so far. He also thanked the mayor and the City of Vukovar for providing space for the counseling center, emphasizing that this is very important because the place where people come to seek help must provide warmth, care, attention, safety, and protection. Besides the space and environment, people themselves are extremely important, especially professionals who love what they do. In this regard, he expressed his satisfaction and wished abundant blessings, strength, love, and wisdom to Sr. Ljubica Radovac, whose professional competence, rich experience working in social institutions, ongoing education, and training in cybernetics and systemic therapy will certainly contribute to high-quality work and good results.

Mayor Pavliček expressed his satisfaction with the opportunity for cooperation and support for this project within the current real circumstances. He thanked representatives of the Church who are open and attentive to the needs of their faithful and other citizens. He also expressed efforts to improve the spatial and financial conditions necessary for the work of such a counseling center, which is available to all citizens of Vukovar without distinction, guaranteeing anonymity and discretion.

Words of support and hope were also expressed by Sr. Matija Pavić, Regional Superior of the Zagreb Region, emphasizing that the whole community is happy and blessed to contribute in this field of work for the “dear neighbor” in need. The Adorers have been working in this region since 2003, and now through the person of Sr. Ljubica even more concretely and actively in the social field and in the pastoral care of marriage and family.

Sr. Ljubica informed those present that the current modest yet simple and beautiful space in the Home of Croatian Veterans is shared by the Counseling Center with other associations arising from the Homeland War: the Mothers of Vukovar, Vukovar veterans, volunteers, women defenders, war invalids, and the children and families of fallen and missing Croatian defenders. She greeted their representatives.

As a sign of the desire for good cooperation and mutual support under the same roof, Bishop Ćurić—accompanied by Fr. Davor Senjan, PhD, and the host of the event—at their request blessed not only the premises of the Counseling Center but also the other spaces where these associations operate. The bishop remained afterwards in conversation with the representatives of the associations and with all the invited guests, for which all those present expressed their joyful gratitude.

Finally, encouraged by the words of Bishop Ćurić, who in the spirit of synodality and shared responsibility emphasized the great importance of consolation and compassion in our Christian life and action—also the mission of this counseling center—he referred to the verse from 2 Corinthians 1:3–4: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation! He comforts us in all our afflictions so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” Invoking God’s blessing upon the premises and the work of the Counseling Center in Vukovar, we give thanks first of all to the good God and also to one another, because we share in communion and consolation. This is a blessing that better prepares us to carry out good work, gives us wind in our sails, and reflects God’s presence that nourishes and strengthens our lives.

**Sr. Ljubica Radovac, ASC**  
Professional Associate  
BIOS Vukovar



## ***Novena to Saint Maria De Mattias***

At the dormitory for female students “**Marija De Mattias**” in Zagreb (Miramarska cesta 100), a novena was held from **January 26 to February 3** in preparation for the feast of **St. Maria De Mattias**. In the evening hours, the students gathered in the convent chapel and began with the prayer of **Compline** before the **Blessed Sacrament**.

The prayer was led by the residence director, **Sr. Marija Bilanović**, who prepared a short meditation for each evening aimed at a thorough examination of conscience. She often quoted the letters of **St. Maria De Mattias**, in which it is evident that MDM had only one fear: “*to lose Jesus because of sin.*”

And we, as Sr. Marija pointed out, are filled with many other fears: the fear of failure, loneliness, an uncertain future... the fear that we are not good enough, beautiful enough, or smart enough. For this reason, we expressed repentance, because we often sought our dignity in the looks of others and in “likes,” forgetting that our true value is written with Christ’s Blood on the cross.

Especially touching was the prayer that Sr. Marija adapted for us and with which we concluded our gatherings—a prayer through the intercession of **St. Maria De Mattias** for success in exams. With the first day of the novena, the exam period had also begun, which is always challenging for each of us. Through her intercession and the **Blood of the Lamb**, we prayed for clarity, wisdom, concentration, and peace in our hearts so that we might always give our best, just like the patroness of our residence, **St. MDM**.

The prayer gatherings were also enriched by singing together accompanied by guitar, and the presence of the other sisters was a clear sign of support and spiritual unity, for which we are immensely grateful.

**Gabrijela Ćurić**  
student



## ***The Beatitudes: Blueprint of Holiness and Mirror of Jesus***

*"As women covenanted together in vowed commitment, we encourage each other to live daily fidelity in radical Gospel living in the spirit of the beatitudes".*

*(ASC Constitution, Article 8)*



*"Il Discorso della Montagna" di Carl Heinrich Bloch*

On the mountain, Christ gives the disciples a new law written in the heart, no longer on stone, that renews our lives and makes them good, even when the world seems to have failed us and is full of misery. Jesus announces Good News for all humanity.

Beatitudes are specific attitudes proposed by Jesus in order to become blessed and holy. By practicing beatitudes Jesus wants us to imitate his lifestyle and become like Him.

Living the Beatitudes can bring us happiness, bring light to the world's shadows, and renew our hearts. God gives hope to those whom the world discards as desperate. Beatitudes are lights that the Lord kindles in the darkness of history, revealing the plan of salvation that the Father accomplishes through the Son, with the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus does not speak of a distant consolation, but of a constant grace that always sustains us, especially in the hour of affliction.

Those who are accustomed to thinking that happiness belongs to the rich may believe that Jesus is deluded. However, the delusion lies precisely in the lack of faith in Christ. ***Christ is the poor person who shares his life with everyone, the meek person who perseveres in suffering, the peacemaker persecuted to death on the cross.***

Jesus says blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. God is peace, Jesus is the prince of peace as we read it in the book of Isaiah 9,6. Peace, or Shalom in the Bible is more than absence of conflict; it is wholeness, harmony and reconciliation with God and one another. God's peace comes through the cross-reconciling heaven with earth and earth with heaven through the power of His Blood.

Likewise, **Meekness** is not *weakness but rather a sign of inner strength and hope, allowing one to endure challenges and difficulties in patience.* In the OT Moses is described as the meekest person on earth. And above all, it is the spirit of Jesus who says: *"Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart"*. The meek do not seek to dominate or retaliate, they trust God to defend their cause. Saint Theresa of Lisieux lived this gentle strength transforming hearts not by power but by love. *Her own*

*life exemplified meekness, as she struggled imperfections and suffering, yet remained trusting in God's love and mercy.*

**Mercy** in Hebrew is HESED - means steadfast love; a love that forgives, heals and remains faithful even when betrayed. Jesus shows mercy to the sinners, sick and the broken; he tells us, be merciful as the Father is merciful. The saints too were reflections of this mercy.

"Mercy is the beating heart of the Gospel" is a quote from Pope Francis' document called the Face of Mercy-*Misericordia Vultus*. This document emphasizes the importance of mercy in the life of Christians, highlighting it as a central theme of Jesus' teaching and mission. Therefore, Mercy is one of the most important gospel values. We can all practice daily little acts of mercy. As mother Theresa says: "**not all of us can do great things. But we can all do small things with great love**".

Again, in the sermon on the mountain blessedness is promised to those who are **persecuted, for the cause of justice...** Jesus Himself was persecuted; the sinless one was crucified as a criminal. The saints suffered because they refused to compromise truth.

As St. Gaspar refused to obey Napoleon saying, I will not, I must not, I should not....as a matter of fact, he had to suffer imprisonment.

Oscar Romero's courage bore testimony that love is stronger than death. His courage is inspiring. As the Archbishop of El Salvador, he fearlessly spoke out against human rights abuses, government corruption, and violence despite receiving numerous death threats. his was a prophetic voice for the poor and oppressed. Romero's courage was rooted in his deep faith and commitment to the Gospel. Today can we be a prophetic presence in our world?.

**In conclusion** when we apply these attitudes to Jesus life, we see them being practiced so perfectly...Jesus was poor in spirit, He mourned and took upon himself the sins of the world, he was meek like a lamb...he intensely desired God's righteousness and justice, he was merciful and compassionate, he had a pure innocent heart to love God and others (Integrity of heart), he promoted peace to all, everywhere, he was persecuted and crucified. In this way, Jesus showed us how to live Kingdom values.

Only God can truly call the poor and afflicted blessed, because God is the highest good who gives himself to all with infinite love, only God can satisfy those who seek peace and justice, because God is the just judge of the world, the author of eternal peace. Only in God do the meek, the merciful, and the pure of heart find joy, because God is the fulfilment of their expectations, and in persecution, they find redemption, and in falsehood, they find an anchor of truth.

*Sr. Marykutty Kanattu, ASC*

## In the Congregation

### Birthdays: Let's Celebrate Life

#### March

<u>50<sup>th</sup> birthday</u>			
<b>Sr. Theresia Nkuwi Sumbi</b>	03/03/1976	Tanzania	
<b>Sr. Miriam De Michele</b>	03/15/1976	Italy	
<b>Sr. Giuseppina Idanza</b>	03/07/1976	Italy	
<u>70<sup>th</sup> birthday</u>			
<b>Sr. Arcangela Ianno</b>	03/30/1956	Italy	
<u>80<sup>th</sup> birthday</u>			
<b>Sr. Annunziata Fersurella</b>	03/25/1946	Brazil	
<u>90<sup>th</sup> birthday</u>			
<b>Sr. Maria del Tansito Palomero Gonzalez</b>	03/07/1936	Italy	

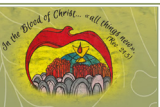
#### April

<u>30<sup>th</sup> birthday</u>			
<b>Sr. Maria Neurice Silva De Oliveira</b>	04/20/1996	Brazil	
<u>40<sup>th</sup> birthday</u>			
<b>Sr. Honorata Vitalis Matowo</b>	04/12/1986	Tanzania	
<u>50<sup>th</sup> birthday</u>			
<b>Sr. Rosalia Charles Bulali</b>	04/20/1976	Tanzania	
<b>Sr. Elzbieta Mróz</b>	04/20/1976	Wrocław	
<u>60<sup>th</sup> birthday</u>			
<b>Sr. Jacintha Manickatan</b>	04/16/1966	India	
<b>Sr. Hang Pham</b>	04/20/1966	USA	
<u>80<sup>th</sup> birthday</u>			
<b>Sr. Beata Tarka</b>	04/07/1946	Wrocław	
<b>Sr. Barbara Biver</b>	04/12/1946	USA	
<u>90<sup>th</sup> birthday</u>			
<b>Sr. Maria Pilar Castañeda Diez</b>	04/05/1936	Italy	
<b>Sr. Elvira Trotto</b>	04/09/1936	Italy	
<b>Sr. Maria (Chiara) Lombardo</b>	04/10/1936	Italy	
<b>Sr. Amelia Colucci</b>	04/21/1936	Italy	
<u>100<sup>th</sup> birthday</u>			
<b>Sr. Giuseppina Catalano</b>	04/05/1926	Italy	
<b>Sr. Jean Marie Landis</b>	04/24/1926	USA	



### International Newsletter

*Adorers of the Blood of Christ*



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**S. Clara Albuquerque - Portuguese**

**S. Miriam Ortiz - Spanish**

**S. Johanna Rubin - German**

### They have returned to their Heavenly Home

02/02/2026	<b>Sr. Mara Matijević</b>	Zagreb
02/04/2026	<b>Sr. Helena (Mara) Radman</b>	Zagreb
02/20/2026	<b>Sr. Alessandrina Rizzi</b>	Italy
02/23/2026	<b>Sr. Valeria Fabbri</b>	Italy
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03/05/2026	<b>Sr. Loreta Perruzza</b>	Italy
03/12/2026	<b>Sr. Joan Stoverink</b>	USA