

International Leader Inspires with Message of Hope and Mission

by Bruce R. Poston

The footprint of the Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is worldwide.

Wherever these Catholic sisters have been – Latin America, Africa, India, South Korea and South Pacific islands – people talk of hospitals, schools, hospice centers, women's shelters, refugee camps, all of it under the umbrella of social justice.

"Social justice is essentially the way to peace," said Sister Mechthild Schneider, a German native and the sisters' worldwide congregational leader, who recently visited the United States province of the sisterhood based in Muhlenberg Township.

Schneider met with Sister Mary Anne Bigos, U.S. provincial leader, to promote programs and seek financial support.

Schneider, 61, who is based in Rome but travels extensively, is serving the last year of her second six-year term with the MSC, which stands for Missionarii Sacratissimi Cordis, Latin for Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

She has been a sister for 40 years. For many years, she was a member of the Peruvian province of the MSC. She is fluent in German, English and Spanish.



Sr. Mechthild Schneider (left) and Sr. Mary Anne Bigos

In all those languages, she can plainly say she is a firm believer in choosing life with a renewed heart, which happens to be the theme of the upcoming 2014 MSC General Chapter meeting to be held in Lima, Peru.

But what does it mean?

For Schneider, it boils down to sharing and caring, showing a greater sensitivity and respect for all cultures and beliefs, while also demonstrating through daily acts Christian values that elevate the dignity of human life.

"There are many good things going on with missionary work, but we are not effective enough," she said. "We will not have peace in the world as long as those sitting at one end of the table have a bountiful supply of food and those at the other end are existing in poverty. "We all must strive to give and get what we need, and faith is the strongest motivation to achieve the goal of justice. But faith without activism doesn't mean anything. Prayer is not enough. There must be a follow through, a connection between faith and social action.

There has to be the living of our faith."

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SPEC: Affirmation Through Presence

by Sr. Dorothy Fabritze, MSC

As the weather is changing, the leaves are falling, and the air is turning cold and crisp, one gets the feeling that the seasons are moving forward. On October 25th the circus ministry of the Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart moved forward to the Big Apple Circus located at this time next to the Lincoln Center in New York. We are still two sisters working in the ministry but as of now, Sr. Remedios and I, Sr. Dorothy Fabritze, form the new circus ministry team.

Sr. Remedios arrived from Mexico on September 26, 2013. With her knowledge of Spanish she will be available to those for whom English is not a first language. Her training in the science of human development also will be an asset to this ministry.

Over the past 14 years the MSC circus ministry has developed from working circus jobs and providing religious instruction and sacramental preparation to what we now call "SPEC" which aims to identify, train, and supervise lay leaders and catechists. With this new project we continue to visit different circuses for three months at a time and then move to another circus. In this way over the past two years, we have visited four circuses each year and have placed four lay leaders and three catechists.

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A Visitor's View: MSC Mission in Mexico City

by Patrick Purdy, SALMSC, July 22, 2013

With the help of my smart phone's map app and the cheery advise of helpful neighbors, the taxi driver, weaving his way through narrow streets of a modest neighborhood of colorful



stucco facades, at last dropped us off in front of the church of *San Ramón Nonato* in the *barrio Esmeralda*.

As we entered we were mesmerized by the brilliance of the glowing sanctuary. After snapping a few photos we soon spotted Luis, the custodian, who led us on the final leg of our quest, through a back way to the street door of the Posada.

Abel, their skilled handy man, answered the bell and, calling out to Sister Theresa, led us into the central atrium of a brightly lit, three-story residence. On the second flight of stairs, in front of a colorful mural that announced the *Posada de San José*, Sr. Theresa

Molchanow, MSC, warmly welcomed us to her home.

It wasn't always this way. When she, Sister Mary and Sister Sheila arrived in Mexico City in the year 1993 with just two pieces of luggage each, under the directive to the MSC Sisters of the U.S.A. to open foreign missions again, they depended on the kindness of the French-speaking MSC priests of Quebec, who had arrived in the parish the year before, for a roof over their heads. They soon found that there was a very great need for trained catechists but later learned, after discovering Rosa, a homeless woman living under some stairs, that their calling



would be to give these elder castoffs shelter, nourishment, dignity and love.

In 2000, The MSC Sisters of the USA Province financed the purchase of a residence behind the church, and grant money funded the remodeling into separate bedrooms,

bathrooms, kitchen, stairway and cistern. The sisters have been able to continue to maintain the Posada after a providential meeting with a member of a family with means to help. In 2012 the Sisters of the USA Province, with the help of many generous benefactors, were able to convert the top floor into a suite of small rooms as a self-contained novitiate, plus a workshop and a common laundry. The Novitiate of the Good Shepherd is home for Sister Theresa and Sister Carolina, a Canonical Novice. Three young ladies, Susy, Dinorah and Abigail are in very serious discernment of their vocation at present. Sister Carolina, who is from Cuernavaca, Mexico, almost single-handedly fought her way to a sacramental life, a doctorate in letters and candidacy in the congregation. Together with the elderly women of the Posada the Sisters address the needs of the women who make their



home in the shelter, and they actively seek new houseguests in need of their love and a safe home. Sweet Margarita, who came to them ill and afraid, now is a happy member of the Posada family, helping with the cooking and cleaning and with the care



of the oldest. Angelina Feliz, who turned 101 years old in January, loves to embroider, and she sold two of her pieces to Christine at the asking price of thirty-five pesos each (\$3 US). Both ladies were extremely pleased by the transaction. Angelina is quite

comfortable and happy in her own room next to the bathroom on the ground floor. The adjoining room is shared by Trinidad (89) and Rosa (95) who have become like sisters and soul mates and are of great comfort and help to each other.

While we were with Sister Theresa another potential houseguest arrived in a wheelchair for an interview. Responding to such need and once again with the help of benefactors, the Sisters converted a first floor spare room into an accessible bedroom for two and added a half bath. They also remodeled the kitchen to handle twelve residents. The women cried when they saw the "beautiful" new space made for them. Sisters Theresa and Carolina continuously follow leads to find abandoned and elderly

women of the barrio whom they can bring to the love of the Sacred Heart. It is a pity that Christine and I did not have time to visit their other house of ministry, Casa de la Incarnación, but we do hope to return next year. It will be very good to see Sr. Theresa and Sr. Carolina and our new old friends. Margarita, Angelina, Trinidad and Rosa and doubtless some old new friends. P



MEXICO UPDATE

The MSC Sisters' shelter for elderly homeless women in Mexico City, La Posada de San José, has transformed itself within the last two months. Changes to the first floor have added a one-half bath, a window to an otherwise dark bedroom, ramps leading into the bedrooms and a storage area below the stairwell. A large multi-purpose room has become a two-bed bedroom and the kitchen has expanded and had a face-lift. Very soon the Posada will have a comfortable capacity for 12 women whose needs and ages are increasing with each new request for hospitality. Rosalia, 95, for example, came to us less than five months ago homeless, weighing no more than 85 pounds and terminally ill with colon cancer. Because we are present here at the Posada, Rosalia will experience the dignity, love and care she deserves before the Father calls her home. Your commitment to share your resources and prayers with us on behalf of the women we serve makes you our partner in this mission of love. Thank you.

SPEC: Affirmation continued from page 1

One of our catechists has identified five students who desire First Eucharist. I have assisted her over the past year with emailed lesson plans and weekly skyping sessions to offer education to these students. This catechist also holds weekly Bible sessions with a group of four women.

All the lay leaders are involved with welcoming local priests into the backstage area to celebrate Mass. They also are responsible to find and set up the Mass area and to inform the circus people of the Mass time and location. The priests have generally commented



As Director of SPEC, Sr. Dorothy Fabritze, MSC instructs and advises lay leaders on various circuses so that they may provide catechetical instruction for other show people.

on the kind hospitality of these lay leaders.



Sisters Remedios and Dorothy enjoyed the fountain at the Lincoln Center the same day they signed on with the Big Apple Circus as the MSC Sisters' new Circus Ministry Team.

Lay leaders and catechists have been given the "This Day" missalette to be used for their own spiritual development. When visiting these women, I can see that the booklets are well used. They appreciate the morning and evening prayer provided and the daily stories of the lives of the saints.

Words of affirmation and appreciation do come our way: "Sister, your presence

with us on the show makes us feel important and affirmed"; "The show is different when you are present. Please come back"; and "There is a peace and calm on the show when you are here."

Praise be to God for allowing us to be the Heart of God in the world!

Young and Not-So-Young Eager for Mission

During the course of one year, Sr. Lisa Valentini, MSC averages four trips a year to the Dominican Republic with groups of missionaries, and 2013 has been no different. In fact, this year marks the highest number of trips from start to finish – five – and she already has trips scheduled for 2014! These missionary groups have included: college students from St. Margaret Mary Parish in Harrisburg (their 10th consecutive year!); high school students from Marian Catholic; college students from Bucknell University; high school seniors and juniors from Berks County, Pennsylvania; high school students from Andover, Massachusetts; and a young adult group from Texas. ♥



Young missionaries of the July 2013 trip rejuvenate themselves in the waters of the Dominican Republic.



Kathy Devlin, center, participated in the July 2013 mission trip as both a chaperone and a missionary.

"The love of the heart of Jesus is the center where everything meets, the pivot on which Catholicism revolves . . . devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus embraces and answers everything."

- Jules Chevalier, MSC



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There are challenges, Schneider said, but in her missionary field there is a strong emphasis on cultivating native sisters to manage affairs and take the lead in mission work in their own countries.

She said the MSC has about 750 sisters with a presence in 20 countries, subdivided into seven provinces and one district.

"After Vatican II, our highwater mark was in 1965, when we had about 2,000 sisters," she said.

In those days, Schneider said, 80 percent of the sisters represented more developed countries and 20 percent came from those countries that hosted mission endeavors.

"Now the split is more like 50-50," she said. "And these days, there is much more of a cultural exchange with sisters from Africa or Asia coming to the United States and Europe and then returning to their native countries."

Schneider said the exchanges have led to a deeper and broader understanding of different cultures and religions.

"We are truly a global village, and the ultimate task is the salvation of humanity," she said. "We must share and learn from one another, and develop an interconnectedness and solidarity so everyone has the opportunity for success at the table. We all must take in the bigger picture."

She felt this is the best approach to overcome hatred and terrorism that leads to divisions and war.

Citing MSC success stories, Schneider said there is a Catholic school in predominantly Hindu India that grew, in six years, to enroll 80 students after it only started with five. She said many Indians recognized the quality of the education their children received there as compared to what was offered in some public schools.

In Korea, Catholic sisters have increased their effort to find Korean families to adopt orphaned children. And in Namibia in southwest Africa, a hospice and health center has led the way to help those with AIDS or assist refugees caught in warfare in neighboring countries.

"We believe the church must be a leader to help the poor to a better future," she said.

On her visits to developed countries in the Northern Hemisphere, Schneider hoped to tap into the financial treasure and human commitment that she believes will help to mitigate world troubles.

And in the process, she sees such intermingling of cultures as not only a worldly assist to the poor, but an education for those more comfortable, yet spiritually adrift, in developed countries.

"I lived in Peru for eight years, where there still was a strong sense of life and community, and feelings of joy, hope and faithfulness among the poor," she said. "We can learn from them." The meaning Eagle – Originally Published 6/22/2013

Convocation of the Lay Missionaries of the Sacred Heart

by Sr. Lorraine Molchanow, MSC

The Lay Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Southern California held the first national gathering of Associates of the Chevalier Family. Fifty lay and religious, including myself, Sr. Mary Seibert, MSC and Lay MSC Associates Joann Rivera, and Lynn Ditlow, came together in Palm Springs, California at Our Lady of Solitude Parish from June 19-21, 2013. Our shared Chevalier, MSC. They related the origins, history, work and goals of the ICC. We were challenged to take the charism, spirituality and mission of the Lay MSC even further.

Following the Convocation in California, Rita and Hannie travelled across the United States, visiting groups of Lay Missionaries in Texas, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. We were

spirituality and mission, the fellowship of liturgy, prayer and meals strengthened our bonds as members of one family.

Associates from across the United States and the world described their experiences and ministries. Among them were Lay MSC's Rita Cleuren (Belgium) and Hannie Jansen (Netherlands). Representing the International Coordinating Committee of the Lay Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, they spoke of the role of the laity in the mind of our spiritual founder, Father Jules



International Lay MSC Associates, Rita and Hannie, sitting front and center, traveled from Belgium and the Netherlands to share their perspectives on the roles of the laity with our Reading, Pennsylvania group. Rita and Hannie explained the goals of the International Coordinating Committee of the Lay Missionaries of the Sacred Heart who number in the thousands across the world.

delighted to have them with us in Reading, Pennsylvania from June 26 to 28. Sisters and Lay MSC gathered on two occasions to learn from our guests' international perspective and to enter into dialogue about areas of growth for the Lay MSC. It was a wonderful experience for us all.

To learn more about the Lay Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and to enquire about joining us in living the Spirituality of the Heart, please visit <u>www.mscreading.org</u>. All are welcome! \Im

75th Anniversary of MSC Presence in Peru

by Sr. Barbara Winkler, MSC



June 22, 2013 marked the 75th anniversary of the presence of the Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart in Peru. Our Sisters' history as a congregation in Peru began when Sisters Mauritiana, Gerberga, Jordanis,

Willibrodis, Agricola and Otfriedis arrived in Callao, Peru on the 30th of June, 1938. They had left Hamburg, Germany on June 7th, being sent by Mother M. Electa, a Superior General who saw the needs and possibilities for our Sisters to live our charism and to make known the merciful love of God among the people of Latin America. These early years marked the beginning of a rich experience for our Sisters in Peru as they learned from

and adapted to a new culture and people. Their strong bond and commitment to the people and the Church of Latin America has had a great impact in Peru, but also on our congregation throughout the world.

We give thanks to God for this mission entrusted to them through the congregation which they so faithfully have carried out over these 75 years in Peru. Because of their dedication, today we continue to serve the people through our MSC institutions: the Clinic Stella Maris, San Lucas School in Lima and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School in Huaraz. The Sisters were instrumental in creating ISDEN, an Institute of Health named after Sr. Cristoforis Deneke, MSC whose mission is to strengthen

the processes of humanization and citizen oversight in health through quality services and support of those social agents working to promote the values and experience of integral human development. Recently our Sisters assumed responsibility for a new mission in San Martin de Porres near Lima which provides a variety of services for women and children.

Over the years, our Sisters have been active in promoting evangelization and working for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. They have ministered in parishes, healthcare and social out-reach projects. This great missionary work begun in faith and trust has very deep roots and is still bearing fruit, not only in Peru, but in various parts of the world through the solidarity and

collaboration of our Sisters on a congregational level.

We celebrate and rejoice with the Sisters of Peru and ask God's continued blessings upon them, the Latin American Church and the people of Peru. May this year be marked by celebrations, prayers and reflections which give life and hope to our Sisters and the congregation as they collaborate in the work of the Lord: "I have come that they may have life and have it in abundance" (Jn. 10:10). As Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, let us continue to bring this message of life and hope to the people who want life, life in abundance. ϑ

Do you have a singular desire to transform lives with the love of the heart of Christ? Would you like to join others whose goal is to positively impact the world?

... then the MSC Sisters' Vocation Committee invites you to consider life as a Missionary Sister of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Come spend some with us in community investigating your possible call to a life lived in service to others across our country and our world. *Be courageous! Listen to that voice in your heart that speaks when all else is silent*. Respect that voice by stopping long enough to discover its meaning in your own life. The MSC Spirituality of the Heart enables us to serve in creative and diverse ways to God's people everywhere. Perhaps you would like to join us?

To inquire about life as an MSC Sister, visit <u>www.mscreading.org</u>, email <u>vocations@mscreading.org</u> or call 610-929-5944.

Good Shepherd Community Alive in the MSC Spirit

The people of Good Shepherd School, Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, share a special relationship with the Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart through their beloved first grade teacher Sr. Mary Ann Lawrence, MSC. As of the 2014 school year, Sr. Mary Ann has moved from the first grade classroom, where she was revered by so many parents and students since 1999, to the positions of tutor and daily substitute in the K-8 school. Excited to begin her new role, Sr. Mary Ann is grateful for the opportunity to remain in her beloved community and to continue positively impacting lives without all of the planning and grading inherent to any classroom teacher. Sr. Mary Ann and all her fellow Sisters express profound gratitude to the Good Shepherd School Community for their continued prayer, support and partnership in our mission to be the Heart of God in the world!



Each year since 1999, Sr. Mary Ann's first graders have visited our retired Sisters at our Motherhouse in Reading, PA. They share a special Mass and a meal, perform a musical program and present hand-made gifts to everyone. In addition, former and present students and their families also enthusiastically join in our two annual fundraisers; the Nun Run and our Spring into Mission Gala.



July 25th marked the beginning of our *Sharing the Heart Series.* This series focuses on bringing people together to enjoy fellowship in the spirit of our MSC charism which stems from the compassionate love of the Heart of Christ. These gatherings include a variety of topics, venues and moderators. The first of these gatherings which occurred in July is called the FiresideChat. The goal of our FiresideChats is to encourage judgment-free conversation about family, self, values, challenges, joys etc. Local author **Maureen Gallagher Fey, Reaching Hope**, moderated our inaugural chat by speaking to forty-one women encircling a campfire about her struggles with alcoholism and her daughter's cancer. She then opened the discussion to all present who shared their thoughts and thanked Maureen for her candid and honest expression of issues and emotions which connect us all to one another.

The second of our FiresideChats took place October 23rd in our Founders' Room at Sacred Heart Villa. **Sr. Eileen Kantz, MSC** moderated by introducing the topic of *Finding Purpose in Everyday Life* to more than thirty men and women. The thrust of Sr. Eileen's message included "seeing the bigger picture" when we become stuck in the drudgery of everyday tasks. She suggested we each develop a personal mission statement that enables us to see the value of our actions, thoughts and words in their true context. For example, if we are parents, our mission is to lay various foundations for our children's futures rather than to accomplish particular chores. Recognition of our personal mission then enables us to prioritize and to simplify. Sr. Eileen's words were so well received, that we intend to host a followup FiresideChat workshop in which we each craft a personal mission statement and brainstorm ways to accomplish it in our daily lives.

We invite YOU to join us for future FiresideChats!

Come as a couple, come alone, bring a friend, bring your son or daughter – the opportunities are endless. Be proactive: join our invitation list by emailing <u>cwhitmoyer@mscreading.org</u>. Continue to check your mail and email for notices of upcoming events in our *Sharing the Heart Series*, because "Where two or more are gathered" we are bound to find insight, friendship and support. \hat{P}

A few attendees from our October 23rd FiresideChat, gathered around moderator Sr. Eileen Kantz, MSC to capture the excitement of an evening of conversation focused on Finding Purpose in our Everyday Lives.



Donor Gifts IMPACT Missions Far and Wide

by Carrie R. Whitmoyer Mission Advancement Director

Many of us have experienced a yearly visit from missionaries through the Pontifical Mission Society in our own parishes. Perhaps you have wondered what ever became of the donation you made to their cause. Perhaps you even have responded to our very own MSC Sisters, Sr. Lisa Valentini or Sr. Marie Janesch, to name just two. Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus would like you to know that one hundred percent of your donations on their behalf are put to excellent use. Following 2012 mission contributions, for example, the MSC Sisters donated \$25,000 collected from those appeals to our Sisters in India to assist in constructing a convent and laying the foundation for a school building in Kurugodu. You may remember that our Fall 2012 Connections included an article written by Sr. Barbara Winkler, MSC which spoke about our various ministries in India in and around Bangalore and Kurugodu where we provide day care facilities, hostels for young women, social services, healthcare and education. Your gifts made possible the expansion of educational services for hundreds of students and their families. The Sisters temporary residential structures now have been replaced by a permanent, safe dwelling, so that their attention can turn to the completion of the school's expansion as more donations are received. Imagine that for one moment . . . you have made mission possible for our Sisters across the globe! You have positively impacted the education of an eight year old child in India! We thank you profoundly for sharing your gifts and practicing stewardship in any way with the MSC Sisters, because whether restricted to our missions abroad or donated to meet our needs in the United States, **YOU are the reason we can function in a world which more often than not requires money to accomplish good deeds.** In order to reach others with the love of Christ, we count on your like-mindedness and generosity. **YOU are missionary through us. Thank you!** May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved now and forever. \hat{T}



Kindergarten children continue to excel at the Central MSC House in Bangladore.



Our MSC Nun Run and Fun Walk has enjoyed great success during its first four years because of our participants. To those of you who have attended one, two, three and in many cases four Nun Run's since they began in 2010, we say THANK YOU! You refresh us with your energy and inspire us! You have conquered a challenging course which includes our fondly named

"hill of death," and you have shared with us your stories of triumph and determination. May you continue to "fight the good fight" in each facet of your life. Be sure to return for our momentous YEAR 5 NUN RUN in 2014!



"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." 2 Timothy 4:7



Dear Friends,

Because I have received many requests for the prayer which I opened our 2013 Nun Run, I am sharing it with you here. Whether you walked, ran, volunteered, sponsored, prayed or wished us well that September 23rd morning, I hope that you take something

from our prayerful moments together.

Thank you for any and all contributions you may have made to ensure the success of our fourth annual Nun Run and Fun Walk.

Almost every year before we begin our Nun Run, we acknowledge someone who has been a participant and faithful supporter of both the Nun Run and the Missionary Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart whom God has called to his Heavenly Kingdom. This year we honored John Zitrick and dedicated the race to his memory.

With love in the Heart of Christ,

fiter Mary Anne Begin, HSC Sister Mary Anne Bigos, MSC

Provincial Superior

Let us pray:

As we prepare in the last moments before our race, we thank you God of all creation for the beautiful day you have given us.

At present it is difficult for the Zitrick family to see beyond their sorrow, but we hope that looking back in memory will help to comfort them. Let us join them in remembering John as he walked this path last year and pray that he helps us walk and run in his memory this morning.

May God quard you and keep you healthy on your run. As you fly along the grounds or leisurely walk along the paths, may you soak in the richness of the world you are running or walking by. To our runners, may He give you the courage to push harder and further than your instincts want and help you to strike the balance between rest and reach. Let God teach you lessons while you run. Let Him show you your character and perseverance by putting a new and deeper perseverance



into you. As you run, be sure to thank him for the gift of your feet, His gift to us in this race of life. While the way may seem long and challenging, just remember you have a finish line to cross and we will be waiting to cheer you over the finish line. Let us be mindful of God's love as we journey in this race throughout our lives. Amen.



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We invite you to visit <u>www.mscreading.org</u> to learn about the MSC Sisters, their mission to be the Heart of God on earth, and the role you can play in their mission.

