

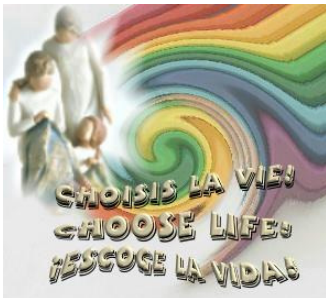


A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS & A BLESSED NEW YEAR 2009!

Wishes from the Holy Family Contemplative Sisters – Nagoda – Sri Lanka
Sharing Greetings
Sharing Life -
an expression of COMMUNION.

The year 2008 is fading away in the horizon. Do we regret it at all? Or have we reason to rejoice as we bring to memory the past 365 days?

Glory and praise to God Alone, for He sustains us in Love, drawing us to Himself.



“CHOOSE LIFE”

was the theme of the last General Chapter of our Religious Institute celebrated in Rome in May this year.

The first few months of the year 2008, our community was fully involved in the Chapter Preparation work through reflections, group work and sharing. “Choose life” became a recurrent theme in our community prayer too. Each time the call to communion got clearly and emphatically surfaced.

With the celebration of the Chapter and the transmission that followed, the fresh call we have been constantly receiving is to understand and live communion in a much broader sense: communion with the entire universal family, with the whole cosmos. Inter-relatedness, inter-dependence is becoming the most prominent quality of our relationships and of our life in its diverse aspects. We are becoming more conscious of *l'esprit de corps* and of our responsible contribution towards the common good.

There would be no ocean.

*If each note of music were to say,
“one note does not make a symphony”
There would be no symphony at all.*

*If each seed were to say,
“one grain does not make a field of corn”
There would be no harvest.*

*If each word were to say,
“one word does not make a book”
There would be no book at all.*

*If each one of us were to say,
“one act of love cannot save humankind”,
There would never be justice and peace on earth.
(Michael Quoist)*

*If each drop of water would say,
“one drop does not make an ocean”*

Amidst war and violence, our one aim is to deepen communion and live the family dimension,
Respecting Life,
Safeguarding the Creation,
Becoming one with the whole universe,
Making friends with the Environment;
and thus promoting God's project of Communion at the heart of the universe.

The Heritage Retreat ...

Among our rich experiences of 2008 was the "Heritage Retreat". It was conducted by our apostolic sisters, Helen Fernando and Kamala Dondeenu who had the opportunity of following the Course on Spirituality and the Heritage Retreat at the very Source of the Holy Family - Martillac. In preparation for this retreat the first four days were devoted to study, reflection, sharing and workshops. These reflections on the Founder's spirituality were a great source of spiritual energy for the young and the old. We learnt to value and appreciate more and more the richness of our Charism. We are very grateful to our Apostolic sisters for their availability to be and to share with us during those 10 days.

Vocations Rally and Silver Jubilee ...



On 14th October, three of our sisters and the Postulant had the opportunity of participating in the "Vocations Rally" held at Wennappuwa for the young women in contact with our Apostolic sisters. The day's programme was filled with various activities. The well prepared exhibits and other means of communication were adopted to introduce to these young people, the Family of P.B. Noailles, with the five vocations.

Responding to the invitation for the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the "Children of the Holy Family", on 24th October, two of our sisters shared the joy of this group, offering praise and thanksgiving to God for the blessings of the journey of the last 25 years together.

On different occasions, we had the joy of welcoming the Novices, Postulants and the aspirants of the Apostolic Group to our house. Such occasions permit us to get to know the younger members and to deepen our relationships with one another.

Experience in another setting... Kegalle ...

This year, our 2 Novices, Postulant and 2 sisters spent 10 days of rest at an Ashram run by the Sisters of Charity in Kegalle. They enjoyed the beautiful nature around in a relaxed atmosphere and with a relaxed rhythm.

During this period they celebrated the Family feast of the Miraculous Benediction of 3rd February. The Triduum in preparation, was prepared by them, each one taking the responsibility of conducting a prayer services on the themes of Praise, Adoration and Thanksgiving to the Lord – "I AM who AM". On the last day, to the joy of all, the Sisters of Charity joined them at the midday meal and recreation. Their sisterly love and concern was much appreciated. It was they who organized the recreation with games and distribution of prizes. They came to know a little more about our Contemplative life-style. Those 10 days were spent gratuitously... Praise the Lord!



Congratulations!

After a prolonged intensive preparation concluded by one month of solitude, our 2 Sisters, Agnes Christelda and Malini Joseph made their Perpetual Profession on 8th September, 2008. The ceremony was held in our parish church due to the lack of space in our convent chapel. Our Apostolic Sisters, parishioners, community friends, family members and the Holy Family Associates of Nagoda participated in the celebration. We were very happy to have had our newly elected Vicar, Sr. Bernadette Taurinya for the occasion. The Bishop of Trincomalee (the diocese from which Christelda comes) presided at the Eucharistic celebration. Our sincere thanks go to our parish priest - Fr. Preeya Jayamanne , and to his Assistant - Fr. Chaminda Perera as well as to our Holy Family Associates, who gave their full cooperation in organizing the celebration in the church. God bless them all!



Sr. Malini could not have her parents present for the celebration as they were not able to travel from India to Sri Lanka due to health problems. Sr. Rose Mary, the leader of the Holy Family Delegation of India was present for the occasion. She organised a thanksgiving Eucharist when Malini visited her parents in India. Malini and her family wish to express their sincere thanks to Sr. Rose Mary and the Sisters of the Indian Delegation.



In availability...

After her generous and dedicated service as Vicar of the contemplatives, at the end of her term of office, Sr. Clare returned to Sri Lanka. We welcome her into our midst with joy.

Our community is called to live availability for the common good of the Vicariate in a very precise manner at this moment. Two of our sisters are preparing to join our contemplative community of Posadas – Argentina in the course of 2009.

In solidarity...

During this season of Advent, in the midst of bomb-blasts, killings, abductions, floods and cyclones, sicknesses and sufferings, the constant prayer that arises from our hearts is,

“Come Lord Jesus, come and save us”

Keeping ourselves sufficiently informed of the situation of our suffering brothers/sisters, especially in our own country, we try to remain in solidarity with them. We have the tangible experience of entering into the agony of the families of two of our sisters. One or two members of these families have been abducted either

by the Government Army or the LTTE. The families of several of our sisters have been displaced and are on the constant move for shelter and safety. We continue to pray that the good Lord be their security.

During the past two years accompanying our Sr. Dorothy in her illness (cancer) has been to us a further invitation to walk along the paschal path. Though in great pain, she is totally abandoned to the Father's will. We offer her our sisterly support in every way possible, remembering so many others in similar situations of suffering.

Formation...

Formation is an essential element in religious life, for ones personal spiritual growth as well as for the enrichment of the community and the Vicariate.

One of our young professed sisters is in Rome following a three-year course at the *Institute Mater Ecclesiae*. From January 2009, a temporary professed sister will commence her theological formation at Joseph Vaz Theologate in Colombo.

Dear Sisters and Brothers, let us praise the Lord for his wonderful mercies towards us all throughout this passing year. Let us abandon the future, the dawning year 2009 to our God, sure of his faithful love that accompanies us at every step. With hearts full of hope, let us continue to pray and work for peace, communion and harmony in our world today.



“Love is waiting”

*In the depths of the Earth, in the womb of the Cave
In the light of a star, in the heartbeat of Mary
Love is waiting to enter.*

*In the smoke of the bombs, in the hail of the Bullets
In the cluster of hatred, in the void of despair
In the hunger and pain, in the bloodshed and tears
Love is waiting to enter.*

*Now silent the sanctuary, in the hearts of us all
Now empty the crib, the star bending low
The wings of the spirit, enfolding the earth
Love is waiting to enter...
O Come, Let us Adore*

