



Esperança

NEWSLETTER

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REFLECTION!

Peace: An Urgent Commitment to Life

We live in times marked by conflicts that deeply wound humanity. In different parts of the world, wars continue to destroy lives, families, and entire communities, leaving a trail of suffering that is difficult to comprehend. Faced with this reality, we are led to ask: what is happening to us as humanity? Why does life, which should be the most precious good, so often cease to be a priority?

It is impossible not to feel outrage upon realizing that immense resources are allocated to the production of weapons and the perpetuation of conflicts, while millions of people still face hunger, poverty, and a lack of basic conditions for a dignified life. This contradiction challenges our conscience and calls into question our deepest values.

Many of the wars that mark our time stem from power struggles, economic interests—including control over resources such as oil—and forms of nationalism that place one nation above all others. These dynamics, often fueled by selfishness and the quest for domination, reveal how human ambition can override the value of life and dignity. History painfully reminds us that when ideas of superiority and exclusion gain strength, they open the way to violence and the denial of the other's humanity.

Building peace also requires a real and ongoing political commitment. It is not enough to desire it in words or intentions; there must be effective political will to promote it, upholding human dignity above economic and strategic interests. In this sense, we are all called to assume our responsibility as citizens, for it is our votes that elect the representatives who make decisions on our behalf. Peace depends, to a large extent, on the political choices we make and the ethical demands we place on those who govern.

Speaking of peace is not merely wishing for the end of wars. True peace is built in daily life, in the relationships we cultivate, in the way we listen to others, in the capacity to welcome, forgive, and promote justice. Peace begins with each person and expands to the community and the world.

Faced with such a challenging global landscape, we are called not to fall into indifference or discouragement. On the contrary, we are invited to take on our role as peacemakers, even in the small gestures of daily life. Every act of respect, every word of reconciliation, every action in favor of justice is a concrete step toward a more humane world.

May we renew, together, our commitment to life, recognizing that peace is not merely a distant ideal, but a responsibility that begins with each one of us.

For reflection:

- How have I been reacting to situations of conflict and violence in the world and around me?
- How can I be a peacemaker in my daily relationships?
- What concrete actions can I take to value and defend life?
- How can we, as a community, contribute to a culture of peace and justice?

Dear sisters, members of the Movement of Mercy, and Associates,

We invite each of you to take a moment to read and reflect, either individually or as a community, on the text **“Peace: An Urgent Commitment to Life.”**

After reading, we ask that you answer the questions and send us your reflections. We look forward to sharing the contributions we receive in the next edition of **the Esperança Newsletter**. We look forward to receiving your contributions by **June 15**. Please send them to internationalprovince@gmail.com. Your participation is very important and will certainly enrich this moment of communion and learning among all of us. We thank you for your collaboration!

BRAZIL

Formation of the Movement of Mercy



In March, an important formation session on the **Church’s Social Doctrine (CSD)** took place in Bayeux for members of the Movement of Mercy. The gathering brought together participants from various groups in a moment marked by unity, learning, and renewal of faith. The formation was led by Deacon Ringson Toledo.

More than just a time for study, the gathering fostered fraternal fellowship, the sharing of experiences, and spiritual deepening. Participants left feeling strengthened and even more aware of the Christian’s role in today’s society.

What is the Social Doctrine of the Church?

The Social Doctrine of the Church emerged in the 19th century, when the Church began to reflect, in the light of the Gospel, on the great changes brought about by modern industrial society. Faced with new forms of work, production, social organization, and economic challenges, the Church discerned the signs of the times and offered guidance grounded in human dignity and social justice.

To this day, the **Social Doctrine of the Church** remains relevant and necessary, serving as a guide for Christians in addressing the social issues of the contemporary world.

The **DSI** presents essential values for building a more just and fraternal society, among them:

- the dignity of the human person;
- the common good;
- solidarity;
- subsidiarity;
- valuing the family;
- the universal destination of goods;
- preferential option for the poor;
- integral ecology.

These principles guide Christian living in various human realities, such as politics, economics, education, health, and social relations.

A Call to Christian Mission

Inspired by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the Church reminds us that faith is not limited to the personal sphere, but is also expressed in community life and in commitment to one's neighbor.

During the formation, the invitation was reinforced for every Christian to seek to live as Jesus lived, to love as He loved, and to look upon the world with compassion and responsibility. The **DSI** urges us to step out of our comfort zones and perceive the pain of those who suffer from poverty, injustice, and exclusion.



Every gesture of solidarity, care, and charity makes God's love present in the world.

Fruits of the gathering



At the end of the training, the joy and enthusiasm of the participants were evident. Many reaffirmed their desire to bear witness in their communities to all that they had learned and to contribute to a more humane and fraternal society.

The gathering also highlighted the importance of expanding formative opportunities like this one in parishes and communities. Investing in the formation of laypeople strengthens the Church's mission and prepares conscientious Christians who are committed to the Gospel and to social transformation.

May initiatives like this continue to flourish, awakening hearts and forming missionary disciples in service to the Kingdom of God.

Movement of Mercy in Ibó



Due to the great distance between Ibó and Bayeux, the members of the Mercy Movement in Ibó were unable to participate in the first annual formation session or in the renewal of commitments held in January.

Faced with this reality, our sisters Dalva, Paula and Jessica traveled to Ibó to meet with local members and foster a special time of sharing, reflection, and fellowship. On that occasion, it was also possible to renew the commitments of the group's members.

The gathering was marked by joy and emotion, especially because Arlete made her commitments for the first time, after three years of journeying with the group.



We congratulate all members for their perseverance and dedication, and we especially welcome the newest member of the Movement of Mercy.

May God continue to bless each person's mission and strengthen this journey of faith and service.

Celebration of Lent and Easter in Brazil and the Philippines

The season of Lent is lived in the Church as a spiritual journey of preparation for Easter. It is a period marked by prayer, reflection, repentance, and the renewal of Christian life. In different cultures and contexts, this significant season of faith is expressed in unique ways, but always with the same goal: to walk with Christ through his passion, death, and resurrection, and to renew our hope in the new life he offers us.

Philippines

In the Philippines, Lent is observed intensely and with a deep sense of community. In our congregation, the three local communities participate in their own celebrations, in communion with their parishes, remaining spiritually united on the same journey of faith.



One of the highlights is the Visita Iglesia, a traditional pilgrimage in which the faithful visit different churches for prayer and meditation on the Stations of the Cross. The communities of New Manila and Marikina also held joint pilgrimage events, accompanied by seminarians from the Missionaries of Jesus, King of Mercy, visiting seven churches and a cathedral. At each location, the

Stations of the Cross were prayed, strengthening the sense of unity and journey with Christ.

Another significant moment was the interfaith Way of the Cross held in Marikina, going from house to house and from convent to convent, concluding at the SCMM Formation House. In Nueva Ecija, the St. Vincent de Paul Community celebrated the Way of the Cross at different locations within the community, bringing the experience closer to the lives of the people.





During Holy Week, all communities observed days of greater silence and prayer. A special highlight was Sr. Nerie's participation in the reflection on the Seven Last Words on Good Friday, reflecting on Jesus' words: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," bearing witness to a message of mercy and forgiveness.

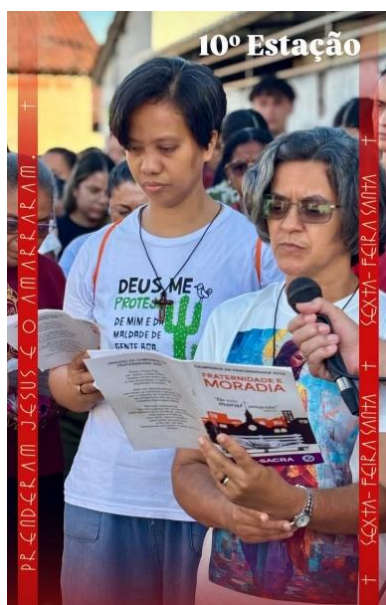
In this devotion, different people are assigned to reflect on each of Christ's seven last words, sharing personal insights and experiences related to each theme.

Brazil

In Brazil, Lent and Holy Week were experienced especially within the educational and community contexts. At the Mãe da Misericórdia and Madre Michele schools, the children participated in reenactments of the main moments of the Passion, helping them understand the meaning of Holy Week.



The sisters also participated in parish celebrations, such as Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil, deeply experiencing the mystery of faith.



Sister Graça joined Sister Edineuza and Sister Luana, of the Congregation of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of St. Anthony; together they carried out the Holy Week mission at the Ivalnildo Camp (Ingá, Paraíba). They led the celebrations, the prayers, the Stations of the Cross, and visited the families. There are about 28 families in that area, living in tents, where agriculture is the main source of livelihood, and these families hoped and longed to one day own a piece of land.



Easter



Easter is the center of Christian life, celebrating Christ's victory and the new life He offers us. In the Philippines, at the Shrine of Mercy, it was celebrated with joy, prayer, and fraternal fellowship, including festive moments with the girls of the community, such as a shared lunch and recreational activities.

In Brazil, Easter celebrations were observed in local and parish communities, in a spirit of communion and renewal.

In both countries, Lent and Easter were experienced as a single journey of faith, uniting us in the mission to walk with Christ and bear witness to the joy of the Resurrection.

PHILIPPINES

Annual Retreat – April 16–18, 2026

Our 2026 Annual Retreat, held at Mt. St. Paul Retreat House in La Trinidad, Benguet, was a sacred time of grace, centered on the theme of the Evangelical Counsels: Obedience, Chastity, and Poverty. These days invited us not only to recall what we profess, but to renew the way we live out these vows in our daily consecrated life.



Under the guidance of Fr. Paul P. Silva, we were reminded that our vows are not merely commitments made in the past, but a living response that calls us to continual conversion.



Obedience is not reduced to mere submission, but reveals itself as a loving and responsible response to God's will, lived with openness, humility, and a spirit of communion. It challenges us to listen deeply with the heart, like Samuel, and to trust fully, like Abraham, even in the face of the unknown.



Chastity invites us to a love of an undivided heart. It is a path of inner freedom that helps us grow in self-giving, to respect boundaries, and to love universally, without exclusivity. Thus, love becomes freer, more mature, and deeply rooted in Christ.

Poverty, in turn, calls us to live simplicity not only outwardly, but above all within the heart. It invites us to let go, to trust in divine providence, and to find joy in a life of simplicity, making us more available to God and to others. Simplicity of life thus becomes a silent witness that God alone is enough.

Throughout the retreat, we were encouraged to respond to the questions posed not only with our minds, but with our hearts, with sincerity and depth. The communal sharing of reflections enriched our experience and further strengthened the bonds of communion among us as sisters in mission.



Indeed, this retreat was a time of remembrance, renewal, and reawakening—a serene return to who we are and to the One to whom we belong. As we return to our communities, we carry with us a renewed commitment to live simply, to love faithfully, and to joyfully bear witness to God's presence in the world.

USA

Celebration in a Chaotic Time

By: Janet Labrecque, SCMM Associate.

On July 4th, the United States will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In the pursuit of a “more perfect union,” the document states that “*all men are created equal and that the Creator has endowed them with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*”



Many Americans, including myself, approach this anniversary with deeply mixed feelings. There is pride in the values we stand for and toward which we strive, and for all we have achieved at home and abroad. Yet, there is growing fear and concern for the future of our democracy in the face of an increasing authoritarianism government and the deep divisions among us over critical issues. To name a few: there is the deportation of immigrants without due process, massive budget cuts in humanitarian programs at home and globally, and efforts to control our judicial

system and the freedom of the press.

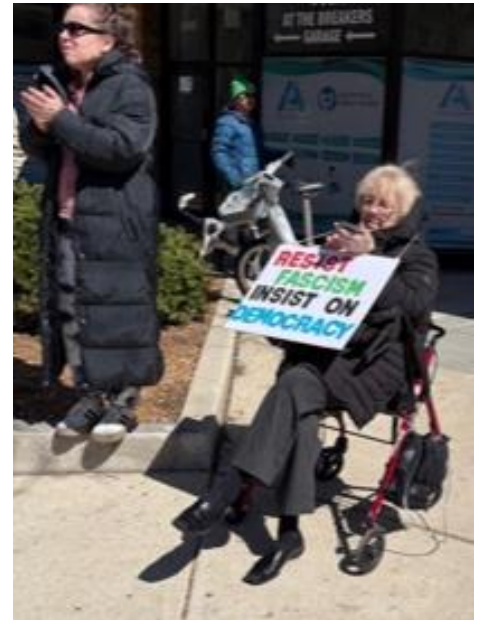
So many I know, including myself, wrestle at times with fear and hopelessness over the uncertainty about where our country is headed. Feeling powerless, it is tempting to retreat into our private spaces away from it all.



Thankfully there are those whose spirit and actions help us keep our hope alive and invite us to do our part toward a “more perfect union”, a more just society. Here are just a few examples (Italics indicate SCMM involvement.)

- The countless number of volunteers of non-profit organizations who work tirelessly to help fill the gap left by budget cuts and who advocate for the passage of laws to promote a more just society.
- We support our *parishes that provide food, clothing and financial assistance to immigrants.*
- We write letters to voters encouraging them to vote.
- We contact elected officials asking them to vote for legislation that promotes our Christian values.
- A portion of SCMM - USA donations go to organizations who fight to protect civil liberties and immigrant rights.

- The millions of citizens who attended No Kings rallies to make their collective voices heard against injustice and authoritarianism.
- *Several SCMM members attended rallies.*
- All those who reach out to others across divisions with respect and small acts of kindness.
- The thousands of people in Chicago and Minnesota who at their own personal risk to protect immigrants from abusive tactics from ICE.



We face an uncertain future, but I believe that if we follow the call of Pope Leo to embody the love of Christ through mercy, solidarity, and action our democracy will stand firm. Then we can enthusiastically celebrate!