

Report to the Laity of the Chevalier Family from the International Council of the Laity of the Chevalier Family



4th April, 2021

It is with pleasure that we send this Report to the Laity of the Chevalier Family with an update of our work.

Despite the ongoing impact of the pandemic we have been able to continue with our work.

Mission Outreach

We were able to achieve our goal three times over and send Sr Rita Grunke 2,300 euros for the construction and repairs of the well.

Sr Rita has written:

This is to inform you that your generous funding has reached our Diocesan office in Nairobi. US \$3500.

Immediately some of it will be made available to fund a complete set of irrigation drop pipes for a newly developing garden at Aluakluak in our Parish of St Josephine Bakhita Mapuordit.

The sub Parish of Aluakluak is active, Some will also be made available for women's development and a rehabilitation of two boreholes which will support hand watered gardens in 2 Jur locations.

The solar panels have been set directly above the tank to avoid theft to a panel.

The irrigation pipes have been ordered in Nairobi and when the next lorry out of Nairobi to Mapuordit is due we will have irrigation.

Meanwhile the ladies are digging post holes while the men look for sand and stone for each post hole.

Tomorrow in Rumbek I'm buying cement so please God by early next week the garden should be functional except for the irrigation pipes.

They'll be here in due time.



Thanks, in particular to the European laity and to the members of OLSH Associates in Australia for donating most of this money.

We will publicise another Mission Outreach Project in the next edition of Encounter of Hearts and we would encourage laity to contribute as generously as they can.

Planning for the International Gathering of the Laity in Cebu, Philippines, 22nd – 29th January, 2023

The International Council has met and has, as directed by our Statutes and Guiding Principles, developed an official list of member countries to be invited to the next General Assembly. There are 39 eligible countries and invitations will be sent during the month of May. We are hoping to find ways to subsidise the costs of those countries without the means to pay. We are praying that COVID will be under control by 2023 and will plan with that as our hope.

Commitment to Justice, peace and care for creation initiatives

The International Council continues to be fully committed to justice and peace initiatives. We send out the First Friday reflections each month and hope that you send them on to all the people on your Contact Lists. They are simple and very well designed and are carefully prepared by Sr. Elly, Sr Joana and Fr Andre' and they are intended to educate us on aspects of our commitment to justice and peace.

We, the laity have also been invited to participate, alongside the professed members of the family and many other Catholic entities in the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. This Dicastery has been created merging the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, the Pontifical Council *Cor Unum*, the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, and the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers. It has developed a seven -year plan to assist us in caring for creation and we will have much more to communicate on this matter in subsequent Reports.

Launch of the International Council of the Laity Website

Doris and Ranulfo are working hard to finalise our international website, due to launch on the Feast of the Sacred Heart. The website will be called Lay Family Chevalier and will operate in compliance with international conventions on copyright and privacy. It will be in the three languages: English, Spanish and French.

COVID opportunities for connection

While COVID has restricted our capacity to gather in groups in many countries around the world there are many initiatives occurring that foster connection and the creation of family. The following are those that we know about:

- **In Belgium,**

Members have formed a Zoom book club where they read a chapter of a book themselves and then gather by Zoom to discuss the chapter.

Monthly zoom meetings are organized with some Open Heart groups. Unfortunately, not all lay people (especially older ones) have internet access. With these people we stay connected through bell circles and letter exchange.

Another initiative from Belgium is a monthly digital silence walk. A member of the walking team does the walking effectively. The participation fee is 10 euros which is donated to charity.

Twice a year we have a guided day of silence from home : 1 day in Advent (close to Christmas) and 1 day in Lent (before Holy Week).

- In **Germany**,

there is only one group and face-to-face meetings have not been able to take place since October. Even contemplation works via Zoom, amazing! We write emails, of course, just like before Corona.

We first met in telephone conferences and since February in video conferences. Every Wednesday evening we sit together in silence connected via the screen. Sr Stephani invites us to contemplation in this way. We regularly send each other encouraging and strengthening messages....

- Many in the **United States** remain active in our ministries.

Some, however, are still under Covid-19 restrictions, for example, nursing home and prison ministries.

Although area group gatherings are suspended during the crisis, we communicate via telephone, email, and video conferencing.

In addition, we still try to organize our USA National Newsletter on a quarterly basis.

- In **Holland and France**

Group members are ageing and some are ill and groups have had to combine and COVID has made it impossible to meet. They are communicating as best they can and sing with Bob Dylan: *The Times They Are a-Changin'*.

- In **Italy** groups are connected through Facebook and different Italian groups live stream prayer and praise to all Italian members at different times of the day.

- In **England**, the group has welcomed new members and stays connected by email, phone and Zoom.

- In **Asia/Pacific** region

Zoom gatherings are being organised with individual member countries by Alison simply to connect and to talk to each other. Planning is underway for a meeting with the Korean and Vietnamese laity and it is hoped to have had a meeting with every member country before the end of the year.

As we come close to the season of Easter – still in COVID times, and for many of us, still living in political turmoil and economic uncertainty, we remember the words of the Psalmist:

Be still and know I am God...

Be still and know I am ...

Be still and know ...

Be still ...

Be

The space and the silence that can come from our restricted access to each other can offer an opportunity to connect more deeply with our hearts and the hearts of each other, and the

heart of Christ. We can connect to the heart when we are in silence. We live in noise, and we are so busy all the time, there is no time, no space, no silence for the heart.

Let us use the space and the silence to listen to our hearts, to connect with the Heart of Christ and to be present to our world, in all its beauty and sorrow.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be with you all.

Blessings
Alison, Doris, Rita.