



SSpS MISSION

Called by the Spirit • Embracing the World

Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters | USA & Caribbean | FEBRUARY 2022



IMMERSED IN THE LIFE OF THE TRINITY

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD WITH COMPASSION

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holy spirit sisters usa



Sr. Maria Theresia Hörnemann, SSpS Congregational Leader carrying the candle for the opening Mass celebration of the SSpS 15th General Chapter in Ariccia Italy along with other Sisters.

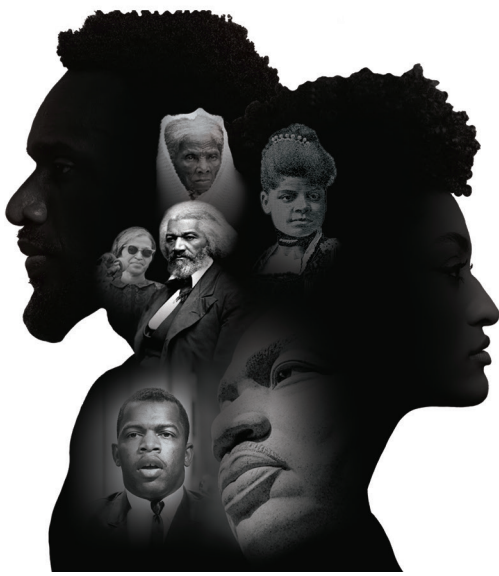
Focus on Mission...

During the weeks from January 13th to 31st, SSpS Sister-representatives from our mission countries throughout the world are gathering / gathered to assess our Congregation's journey of the past six years -- widening the circle of communion with God, with the marginalized, with creation, with one another. Another important facet of the gathering is the election of our Congregational Leadership Team for the next six years. Finally, the Sisters will discern and identify our direction (focus) for the next six years as they ponder the question: "What gift does the Spirit want to offer the world through us?" Information regarding the outcomes of this important gathering will be shared in future issues of SSpS MISSION.

While we share little tid-bits of mission life and service through our stories, let us remember that each of us - YOU as well as dedicated Sisters, Brothers, and priests are MISSIONARIES! We (each of us) are called to discipleship through our baptism and we share the "Good News" of God's love through our actions of daily life! Our warm smile, helping hand, encouraging words, listening ear are expressions of God's love to all those we encounter in our daily, often hum-drum lives! They are the simple gestures that flow from a heart "immersed in the Trinity" (Father, Son, and Spirit) and which transform the world with compassion!

Thank you for being in mission with us through YOUR accompaniment and prayers!

- Sr. Mary Miller, SSpS



Remembering and Celebrating **BLACK** HISTORY

By: Sr. Carol Welp, SSpS

We are in the season of remembering and celebrating Black History. While remembering Black History, it is important to acknowledge the many forms of injustice handed to our black brothers and sisters throughout our American history from the years of slavery up to today in the various expressions of white supremacy. We celebrate because of the tremendous courage, wisdom and love our black brothers and sisters contribute to the cause of Justice in our country. In particular, we recall Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Although he faced injustice personally and in his black community, he struggled for justice for all people even those who were being unjust to him. The Spirit of Jesus, who loved and wanted the best for all and each person, who struggled to overcome evil with good, who blessed all life, was very alive in Dr. King.

Let us reflect on the breadth of his wisdom:

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate only love can do that." - **(Martin Luther King, 1963)**

"Every nation must develop an overriding loyalty to human kind to preserve the best in their individual societies." - **(Martin Luther King, 1967)**

When the Holy Spirit Missionaries came to the United States in 1901 about 90% of the black people in our country lived in the south where the attitude was: "When I speak of education, I mean the white people.....Why squander money on his (black person) education when the only effect is to spoil a good field hand and make an insolent cook." (Governor James K. Vardaman in the Jackson Clarion Ledger July 30, 1903). The SSpS Sisters accompanied our SVD Brothers and Fathers to the then 'mission country' of the USA for service with the poor and marginalized. When confronted with the situation of the Black Americans in the South, their attitude can be summarized in what Kamala Harris said, "I believe that a child going without an education is a crime." (Kamala Harris) So, in 1906, four Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters were on a train to Vicksburg, Mississippi, at the time the largest city in Mississippi, to open a Catholic school for black children. It would be the only one of its kind in an area of over 27,000 square miles. For 70 years the Sisters worked humbly and quietly in Mississippi forming educated and assertive groups of Black Americans who could dialogue and confront our Church and Nation with its sin of racism.

As we remember and celebrate Black History Month we invite all our readers to reflect on the wisdom and courage of our black leaders, especially Martin Luther King, Jr. and to share in our SSpS Vision of "living more deeply in communion with the Triune God and with peoples of diverse cultures in the Gospel spirit of love, joy peace, respect, compassion and justice for all."

"There is not a liberal America and a conservative America - there is the United States of America. There is not a black America and a white America and Latino America and Asian America - there's the United States of America." - **(U.S. President Barack Obama)**





LEARN TODAY LEAD TOMORROW

By: Sr. Yuliana Meno, SSpS

Our Lady of the Assumption Preparatory School, Jamaica, was not spared during the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was great enthusiasm as we began the new academic year 2019-2020. There were 146 students enrolled from Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 6; 12 teachers and 10 additional staff members were employed. The school was showing good signs of growth and development. It was a blessing from God! Hopes, visions, and plans were in place until they were interrupted by Jamaica's Prime Minister, Andrew Holness' announcement that all schools, Public and Private, throughout the Island have to close due to the global COVID-19 pandemic that did not spare our island country. The day was March 12, 2020, just 2 weeks before beginning the 2nd term of the school year. Parents were informed by the teachers to collect their child's books on the same day. We were going to have ON-LINE CLASSES. Consequently, parents, students and teachers were not prepared for the on-line classes. We were not prepared for this "new normal" of learning. No training whatsoever and no equipment. What are we going to do? Will ON-LINE CLASSES for our students be possible? How? These were dominant worries pounding in my head at that time.

Virtual Learning Platforms

The Ministry of Education Youth and Information Sector provided information, courses, and guidelines for schools to implement the virtual learning platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and so forth. Most of the teachers were not familiar with these platforms except WhatsApp. However, they were trying to conduct the on-line classes as best they could. After a week or two, we realized that the ON-LINE system was not good. Many of our students were not getting sufficient instruction in many of the basic skills due to the challenges related to manipulating the platforms and the lack of devices and internet connection in the home. Similar issues were experienced by our teachers. Parents were not satisfied with this new way of teaching and learning. As a result, almost half of the enrolled students withdrew from the institution. The withdrawal resulted in challenges and conflicts related to other school issues such as school fees and payments.

School Fees - Salary - Utility

OLA PREP SCHOOL continued its virtual learning activities for the summer term, the last term of the school year, with only 92 students. I was hoping and praying that all the families would pay their school fees, so that we would be able to manage teachers' salaries and utility bills for the remaining 3 months (June-August 2020). Since the virus settled in the island, working parents (employed) experienced cuts in their working hours resulting in lower family income. Parents who had a small business or the day laborers lost their business or their jobs as well. In light of the parents' financial situation, the School Board decided to adjust the amount for the school fees as well as the teachers' salaries. Even with such adjustments, parents continued to face a huge challenge to pay the school fees. The school fee payments were coming in very slow, gradually, often delayed, and then nothing! More families withdrew their children. At the end of June 2020, there were only 60 students who paid the school fee. OLA PREP SCHOOL was facing a huge challenge! The cooks, janitors, security guard, secretary and kiosk attendant were laid off. The school was able to manage the remaining salaries and utility bills until the month of July 2020. There were not sufficient financial resources for the August payroll and utility needs. The school was financially insolvent! Yet, teachers must get their share and the utility bills for the month must be paid.

The school is blessed to have a very supportive Pastor, Fr. Frank Power, SVD. On behalf of the Society of the Divine Word Missionaries, who donated money for teachers' salaries and the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters of the Paraclete Province who donated money to cover the utility bills for the month, OLA PREP SCHOOL was never left to struggle alone. I believe that God who sent His servants for His mission will never let them alone!



The Gospel says: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." - (Matthew 28:19-20).

The New Academic Year 2020-2021

It might sound ironic that the School Board went forward and agreed on opening the school for the new academic year in the midst of challenges especially in the financial department. Indeed, the challenges are there, but we cannot close the school! Private schools in the area were opening registration for the new academic year 2020-2021. Why not OLA PREP SCHOOL? Therefore, registration and re-registration for the new academic year was ready, while not knowing whether the school will re-open for in person instruction. There were 116 students registered. Parents were enthusiastic, hoping the classes would be in person. Some of them started to pay school fees at the beginning of September. According to the Ministry of Education Youth and Information's academic calendar, the new academic year was expected to begin on September 7, 2020.

However, it was postponed until October 5, 2020, due to the increasing cases of COVID. Private schools were allowed, by the government, to operate according to the prescribed plans if they complied with certain regulations. OLA PREP was not completely ready. Our plan was to begin school activities on September 21, 2020, with orientation training on how to manipulate the on-line classes using platforms, and so forth. The actual first day of school with on-line classes officially began on September 28, 2020. Parents were hoping that the on-line classes would be better than before. However, there was no change. It was not functioning well. The lack of devices and weak internet connections still existed. In order to engage with on-line classes, the school needed to provide laptops and textbooks

for each teacher. Laptops! Where will the school get money to buy laptops? As in spring, parents began to withdraw their children from OLA PREP SCHOOL. Those who paid school fees were asking for a refund. From 116 students registered, there were only 92 students by the second week of October. Pre-Kindergarten class was dropped due to very low enrollment, only three students. The two Kindergarten classes and Grades 5 and 6 were merged due to a similar situation. The school was financially broke again! In agreement with the School Board, four teachers were laid off. It was a very difficult time for me to make such a decision during the time of crisis. For the first time in my life I felt hopeless and discouraged. Yet, the school has to move on. I happened to say that "it was no joke to be a school leader during this time of difficulty".

The Courage to Keep Going

Plans including grant applications were made with the help of Sr. Barbara Miensopust, SSPS and Miss Arantxa Martinez. While completing the applications, I remembered our founder, St. Arnold Jansen's wish when he needed money for building the mission house, he said: "the money is in the pockets of the donors". I applied the same wish and trust believing that it will happen. My daily intentions were asking for God's courage to keep on going. It reminds me of a sermon given by a famous Jamaican preacher, Dr. Charles Stanley. He says, "As follower of Jesus Christ, giving up is not who we are. Whatever the situation might be, that you are about to give up, stop for a while and ask this question, "Is this fitting for me as a follower of Jesus?" This message played vividly in my thoughts. I am a follower of Jesus Christ. I am a missionary. The message awakened my spirit as missionary. Giving up because of difficulties is not the spirit of a missionary. I need to move on, utilize what the school has, and do what I can.

COVID -19 protocols (sanitation plans) were demanded by the Health Department. That was the first and foremost requirement in order for the school to be certified for face-to-face classes. All posters and applicable signs must be posted in each room, restroom, wall and gate. Classrooms, hallway and the sidewalk were marked with 6 ft. distance markers. Hand sanitizer, hand soap, paper towel, garbage bins, and so forth, must be provided for each room. Three handwashing stations were permanently installed. Everything related to COVID must in writing and filed. I spent hours dealing with these documents. I felt like there was too much work and too little time. Above all, there was concern for the financial resources in order to fulfill most of the requirements.

Early in February 2021, I got an email from Christian Brothers' Foundation, that the grant submitted in November 2020 had been approved. Another grant submitted to DOK through Srs. Agathe Bramkamp and Ilse Beckman, SSpS and the German Mission Office was also approved, and a donation from our faithful donor in the USA, Brian Gaspardo was received. Their generosity was remarkable! The donations were sent to us. I could not describe it in words. My warm tears flowed. Thank you Lord, for your generous love received through these donors! The donations lightened our burdens. We were able to purchase all the necessities for re-opening the school. OLA PREP SCHOOL has never been left to struggle alone!

Satisfactory - Satisfy

All the COVID-19 safety plan documents and requirements have been completed and we were ready for inspection from the Health Department and Independent School Units. Four inspections were conducted by the Health Department Unit and one by the Independence School Unit. The final inspection was conducted in December 2020 and the school was SATISFACTORY AND CERTIFIED for face-to-face classes. The school conducted in person classes for 2 months, January-February 2021. It was a happy opportunity for everybody. Students who have health issues were allowed to continue with the online classes. However, the face-to-face classes were again interrupted in the second week of March 2021 due to the rapid increase of

COVID cases in the country. All classes once again returned to the virtual mode. Parents and students were more ready for the online classes. Teachers were provided with laptops and textbooks. Therefore the online classes functioned well. Students were learning something. Parents were satisfied. We ended the school year on July 2, 2021 with 82 students enrolled. Kindergarten to Grade 3 students had on-line classes for the entire term while Grades 4-6 students were having face-to-face classes. The Graduation ceremony for the Class of 2021 was conducted on July 7, 2021. Five Grade 6 students and ten Kindergarten students graduated. It was a day of "thanksgiving" for God's blessings during this school year.

The New Academic Year 2021-2022

Registration and re-registration for the coming academic year began in May 2021. Summer School was conducted for 2 weeks in July 2021. Other plans and preparations for the new academic year were made. The school was ready to begin its new academic year on September 7, 2021.

To conclude this article, I would like to express my gratitude to Sr. Ilse, SSpS and the DOK organization, Christian Brother Foundation, Mr. & Mrs. Gaspardo, Mr. Mark Kelly, Fr. Frank Power, SVD and the Divine Word Missionary, the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters of the Paraclete Province, Sr. Mary Miller, SSpS - Mission Secretary and Miss Arantxa Martinez -Development Coordinator, for their generosity and support for OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION PREPARATORY SCHOOL in Morant Bay, St. Thomas, Jamaica. Special thanks to St. Norbert's Parish in Northbrook for supporting the school from the beginning of its establishment. To Loyola Foundation for supporting us in the previous year. The remarkable generosity and support of so many benefactors has enabled the school to continue Catholic educational opportunities for children in the Morant Bay area as well as to fulfill its educational and holistic purposes for Jamaican youngsters to be able to "learn today and lead tomorrow". Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic preparatory School has been growing amid its on-going challenges. We are grateful for your continued support! Thank you and God Bless.



OUR MISSION IN ANTIGUA-BARBUDA

By: Sr. Elsa Castellano, SSpS



Living the missionary experience during 2020-2021, we had to back-track our programs due to the increase of the Coronavirus infection. We had planned and prepared to start the annual faith formation programs for the Hispanic Community.

This year we will continue to strengthen basic Christian formation to the Hispanic immigrant community, most of who are from the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Venezuela. We offer support in Spanish, especially for adults, through meetings in preparation for the Sacraments of Eucharist (First Communion) and Confirmation.. The pre-teens and youth are integrated into preparation programs with the English-speaking community.

We also offer workshops for parents and Godparents to the Sacrament of Baptism. During the year we conduct retreats during the Advent, Lent, and Pentecost Seasons. Traditionally we gather to pray the novenas for Christmas and Our Lady of Altagracia. We continue with formation workshops in Lectio Divina, moments of prayer, and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. In collaboration with our Deacon, we make weekly visits to the parish families, especially to the sick. Our regularly scheduled radio program is another means of evangelization. Through it, we are able to reach more homes ad workplaces.

Father Robert Ratajczak, SVD, and at the request of the people many of whom have become unemployed, have proposed sewing workshops, bakery workshops, computer workshops and support classes especially for children ages 6 to 12 years. Also, this year we want to start art workshops in catechesis. Important for us, at this time, is that the pandemic is receding and the health situation of our people allows us to carry out our pastoral and missionary work.



Your prayers and the generous support of benefactors help us to provide materials for these workshops. We are grateful for all that you do!

In the face of the many adversities and setbacks in which we live today, let us not lose hope! Let us not allow ourselves to be anesthetized by the coldness that seems to reign in these times. As long as we remain attentive to those around us, as long as we continue to struggle and build a world that needs each one of us, and at the same time "infect" ourselves with the gift of others, we will be gentle, kind, and above all, we will be HUMAN! Let us not lose the opportunity to listen to the voice of God within us and rejoice in knowing that GOD LOVES US!

Ministry of Evangelization in Chinatown

Sr. Monica Zhang, SSpS

St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta Parish Church in Chicago's Chinatown neighborhood is a multicultural community that welcomes migrants of various nationalities. Sr. Monica Zhang has found there a new field of apostolate and shares her experience.

I owe this opportunity to the pandemic. The confinement home and internet connections brought me into contact with a group of Chinese, based in Chicago. I was invited to join their weekly rosary, via Zoom, sharing about religious insights and the relationship with Mary.

After, I was invited by the parish team to work for evangelization in Chinatown, Chicago. It was a great opportunity to serve God's people, especially the Chinese at St Mother Teresa of Calcutta Parish. I started working as an outreach and formation coordinator in August.

In my 10 years in the United States, I have always lived in small towns. But I am learning a lot and I enjoy new encounters and challenges. The first thing I did was research about the neighborhoods. There is a good concentration of Chinese, but also a mix of Poles, Filipinos and Hispanics. On Sundays I attend

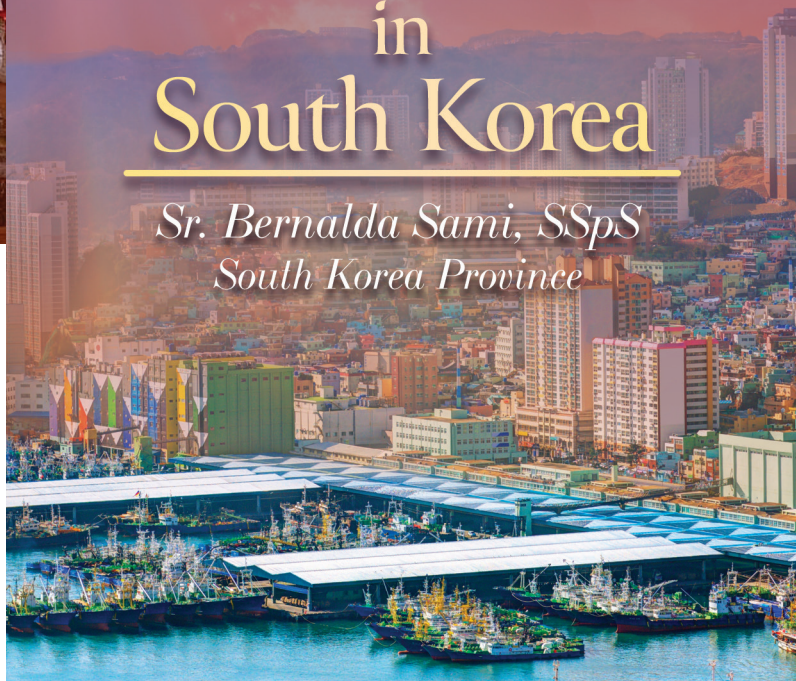
different masses to get to know the parishioners and the parish situations. There are Masses in English, Cantonese, Mandarin and Indonesian.

This exposes me to the experience of multicultural communities in this parish. I walk around the neighborhood in Chinatown and Bridgeport asking for information and trying to build a relationship. But approaching people is not easy, as it seems they have become very sensitive to keeping their distance during the pandemic. But with the grace of the Holy Spirit, 4 people showed interest in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults.



Missionary Experiences with Migrants in South Korea

*Sr. Bernalda Sami, SSpS
South Korea Province*



Dealing with their problems is not easy. I myself have limitations apart from language barriers to deal directly with the workers themselves, employers, job centers, immigration, police, hospitals, banks, etc. The Migrant Centre is their home where they can come, rest and share their experiences. It is also a place of prayer and guidance. We offer Korean language classes, consultancy, medical clinic, picnics and spiritual activities. All services are free of charge.



“In this ministry I have learned many things and these experiences have brought me closer to God.”

At the Migrant Centre people from many countries can be at home, share their experiences, rest and find support. I have been working with them for a long time and I need patience and persistence. Although not everything can be solved, those experiences have really given meaning to my missionary life and I thank God. I hope my presence can be a blessing to all the people I meet on my life journey.

“Although not everything can be solved, those experiences have really given meaning to my missionary life and I thank God.” and many groups from civil society have formed a network of solidarity with the indigenous people, helping them meet their basic needs like building houses and fighting for their rights.

I am Sr. Bernalda Sami, from Indonesia, and I work at the Guri Exodus Migrant Center in the Diocese of Uijeongbu, South Korea. Guri Exodus handles consultancy for foreign workers and international marriages as well as refugees. I accompany workers from East Timor and Indonesia, marriages and also students from Indonesia studying in Korea.

In this ministry I have learned many things and these experiences have brought me closer to God. By dealing with migrants' problems, such as labor and salary issues or other situations they face, they come closer to me and God is enlightening my heart and mind to be their side.



HOW CAN WE BECOME THE BEST VERSION OF OURSELVES?



If I were writing a book, I would have to make many changes and corrections along the way. Then at the end, knowing me, I would probably rearrange, rewrite and still make some changes. In a way this is kind of like my life's journey. I need to make some changes and some corrections to really become a better and the best version of myself.

As Fr. Ronald Rolheiser says: "In the gospels, Jesus tells us that there exists a certain secret, a hidden wisdom, which should we grasp it, is the key to unraveling all the deep secrets of life...should we miss it we will never understand life. For Jesus, the hidden secret that holds the key to everything is the cross: the wisdom of the cross and the brokenness of the one who died on the cross." (The Passion and the Cross- pg. ix) As hard as it is for me to admit it, I know that it has been times when I experienced loneliness, hurt, loss or some other cross in my life that God has grown me, matured me and changed me for the better. Sometimes it took me awhile before I could see it or accept it. At one point, I had to really stretch in order to thank God for situations that had happened to me. That was a turning point. If I really believe that Jesus was sent by a loving Father to teach us how to live and love, then the cross has to have an important place because that was so much a part of his life.

Jesus loved us so much! Jesus loves each and every one of us! He could have been angry at the rejection, misunderstandings, and hatred that he experienced during his years of ministry. Loving, caring people are especially vulnerable in these painful situations, so He truly had to grow in forgiveness, wisdom and understanding. He even laid down his life for us!

If I want to live by the most important commandment that was given to us: "Love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself." then the best version of myself will have to be that loving, forgiving and wise person who is willing to lay down my life for others and to accept my brokenness. Yes, I have to make some corrections. COME, HOLY SPIRIT!

Sr. Pat Snider, GSpS

Holy Spirit Missionary Association, Directress

Embracing Afresh A Season of New Opportunities



NEW EPISODES
SEASON 2



thank you, but inform you of some of the updates to this years episodes. Particularly in 2022, we will be airing on a bi-weekly schedule. The reason for this is the inspiration to open our calendar for more international guests. We want to interview SSpS Sisters from around the world to give you even more news regarding the Sisters and the missionary life.

Our goal in this new format will be to enlighten you our viewers to what religious life looks like in real time. You will here stories of hope, faith, love, overcoming challenges and service. Within the next issue of *SSpS Mission Magazine*, you will here from the co-hosts of "Christ over Coffee", Sr. Rosalia Galmin, SSpS and Mr. Andrew Dixon III (SSpS U.S. Province Communications Coordinator) where we look forward to hearing more about the show, its involvement within the Province from a vocational perspective and much more. Stay tuned!

Greetings everyone! We wanted to stop for a moment and share with you a very special update. We recently began production for season two of our online vocation broadcast "Christ over Coffee." We have been very blessed to see the comments from so many of you our viewers and wanted to not only



Join Us in Mission

Meet some of our Sisters and learn about our mission service with "Christ Over Coffee" Through your prayers and generous support, YOU are in mission with us!



YouTube @holy spirit sisters usa

Dear Mission Friends and Supporters, we wish to assure you and your loved ones of our daily prayers of support during this time of the coronavirus pandemic. May our loving God be with all who are suffering and protect medical personnel, health-care providers, and first responders as they carry out their daily responsibilities. We invite those of you who can to join us in mission through your generous financial support for the Mission Ministries of the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters.

Please accept my Mission offering of \$ _____

or You may donate online at: [www. https://www.sspS-usa.org/donation.html](https://www.sspS-usa.org/donation.html)

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The Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters are an international—intercultural community of 3,000 Catholic, religious women, serving in 48 countries. Missionary activities include pastoral work and catechesis, education, nursing and health care, social work, adult education, and many other services to promote human dignity.



Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters

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