



# SSpS MISSION

Called by the Spirit • Embracing the World

# PENTECOST

BUT YOU WILL RECEIVE POWER  
WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT  
HAS COME UPON YOU



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## Focus on Mission

Dear Readers and Mission Collaborators,

May! Month of our Blessed Mother, Mary... month of the Holy Spirit, Pentecost... and the Blessed Trinity! Spring in full bloom, bursting with new life! And yet, so much of our world is wrapped in violence and war, poverty and need!

As we continue to give our attention to the theme of "Compassion", let us implore the Holy Spirit of Pentecost and our Blessed Mother's intercession for peace in the Middle East (Israel, Gaza and surrounding areas), for peace in Russia and Ukraine, for peace in Haiti, for peace in our country...within our families! **Prayer is an act of compassion!**

Keep in mind other ways in which your acts / actions of compassion affect the lives of others, filling our world with peace and love and joy!

Perhaps some of the favorite prayers of our founder and foundresses, St. Arnold Janssen, Bl. Maria Helena Stollenwerk and Bl. Josepha Stenmanns will be your prayers as well.

**May the Holy Triune God live in our hearts  
and in the hearts of all people.**

**May the darkness of sin and the night of unbelief  
vanish before the light of the Word and the Spirit of grace,  
and may the Heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all!**

**Immaculate Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Pray for us!**

**Sr. Mary Miller, SSpS**  
Editor, SSpS Mission Magazine

# SSpS 2024: The Year of Compassion

## A SHARED ACTION

Sr. Kreti Soledad Sanhueza, SSpS

We reflect under this subtitle that which the Holy Scriptures reveal to us about God's compassion, based on two very significant Biblical stories... the story of the "burning bush" and that of "the blind man of Jericho". We want to highlight two things: first, that the experience of God's compassion in the Bible is a transversal theme and, therefore, is not limited to classic stories such as the Beatitudes and the Good Samaritan. Second, that the experience of God's compassionate love entails explicit work on people's lives.

We begin with the text of "the burning bush" in Exodus 3:1-17. We recognize this text as that of the 'vocation of Moses'. We know this story is the prelude to a great task that God entrust to Moses. In this text are the central elements of this task: perception of reality, leadership, and action strategy.

**Perception of reality.** The God of the ancestors appears to Moses mysteriously, on the mountain, like a burning bush that is not consumed. This God calls Moses and shares with him... talks with him about how He sees the reality of the people of Israel who are being burdened and mistreated by their oppressors. God tells Moses that He has heard their lamentation and cries; and that He has seen their suffering. ... that is why He is revealing Himself, because He wants to deliver them. Moses knows this reality because he himself was raised and lived in Egypt. ...He knows

about the mistreatment of the Israelites, except at the time he did not know how to respond well in the face of that unjust reality, and he fled.

**Leadership.** God knows Moses. He knows the indignation Moses felt while he lived in Egypt and saw the oppression of his people. There is something in this man that is in tune with God's desire to deliver the people. ... God sees that Moses can do it. God summons him to take care of the people Throughout the Pentateuch, we see Moses as the intermediary between God and the people. ... that despite his weaknesses, he is a man who puts his leadership "at the service" not only of God, but also of the people entrusted to him.

**Action strategy.** What is the mission of Moses? God calls Moses to help the people leave the oppression situation and to form a new people, where there is no injustice, no oppression, no marginalization. God undertakes to be at Moses' side. Moses needs only to trust in God. God's summons to Moses contains three actions: go to Egypt and ask for the liberation of the Israelites; take the people out of Egypt, and lead the people to the promised land. ...From that experience of encounter between God and Moses, Moses learns to love to intercede for his people, even when the people are unfaithful to God, Moses' heart is with the people in the same way that God loves Israel.

*For reflection:*

*What afflictions do you and the people around you experience?*

*Do you hear the voice of God, inviting you to do something?*

*What are some concrete actions that promote teamwork and involve those affected?*

# ROOTED IN LOVE

Sr. Anita Marie Gutierrez, SSpS



***“... it is much more important that our Sisters prepare themselves to serve the dear Lord in the missions...”***

*- Arnold Janssen, SVD - Founder*

...such was Fr. Arnold Janssen's style as founder/priest and saint in relationship to his leadership companions: M. Maria, M. Josepha (co-foundresses of the SSpS) and M. Leonarda (foundress the SSpS in the USA). Even in the early years they were totally dedicated to the mission of the Church.

To prepare the first Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters (SSpS), which he had founded for the missions, Father Arnold organized classes before their first profession. He started out with Spanish for the first group which he himself taught, then came English, German, Bible History, catechism, playing the organ,... To efficiently prepare the Sisters for the missions, Arnold formally opened a four year Teachers' Training College in the convent of the Sisters; for other Sisters, he prepared training fitting their particular gifts.

Together, Father Arnold and M. Maria and M. Josepha selected the Sisters for their mission

appointments. Father Arnold himself in a simple ceremony in the Sisters' chapel gave each of the departing Sisters her mission cross, went with the Sisters to the statue of our Blessed Mother to sing the Hail Star of the Sea. After Father Arnold blessed the Sisters, the first four missionary Sisters entered the waiting carriage to take them to the station for their Argentinian mission. Sisters Maria and Josepha also escorted the missionaries to the train station for Togo...

Years later when the SSpS were 6 years old, Elise (M. Leonarda) joined the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters and lived in the Notre Dame Convent, where she met Father Arnold, M. Maria and M. Josepha. Fr. Arnold and M. Josepha appointed M. Leonarda and five Sister-companions to found the SSpS in the USA! What did the journey hold for them? With the fire for mission burning in her heart, one night M. Leonarda began a discernment before the Blessed Sacrament that has guided the SSpS mission throughout the last 123 years:

to promote faith and hope in the Holy Spirit through education, health care, spirituality... beyond the Illinois borders to WI, PA, IA, ARK, MS... to meet the needs of the times in Africa, Asia, Oceania,...





# Letters from Ukraine

Sr Maria Marta Przywara, SSpS &  
Sr. Maria Sleziaak, SSpS

Dear Sisters and Friends of Mission,

Thank you very much for remembering us and Ukraine today in a special way. We clearly remember that day two years ago. We SSpS gathered for a seminar in our convent in the small village of Verbovets. When I got up very early in the morning, I could hear explosions. I thought that there were hunters in the forest, but soon we read the shocking news: the war began!

In the beginning, we thought one week, one or two months and the war will finish. Today, it is two years later! We realize that the end is not going to come soon.

Recently, I was in Zaporizhzhia and I could see the fear of the people because the Russians are coming closer to the city. Consequently, many shops and pharmacies are emptying and closing. The people who are able to find work receive very small salaries. On the campus of the Catholic Church, 4 times a week food is being distributed. I saw a crowd of some 1,500 people standing in a queue to receive a loaf of bread and something to make a sandwich. The people are waiting for 2- 3 hours.

At the same time in Zaporizhzhia, in the Church of the Merciful Father, the people pray. For the daily morning Mass about 200 people gather. There I met Alona and her husband, who escaped after Russians came to their town and house. They became our parishioners. During the summer, they got married there. They had been together for many years. Ten years ago, they lost their 3 children in a car accident. Now they lost their house and livelihood. Their sharing was very moving. They are an example of people who suffered a lot, but who are being enriched spiritually. They love and support each other very much

and have deep faith seeing that the Lord is with them and has a plan for them.

Alona shared many traumatic stories but among them were also beautiful examples about reading the Bible in the basement. When they were in prison in their own home, she would read the Bible out loud and memorized Psalm 91. It strengthened her and her husband very much. It was a miracle that they were able to escape the occupation! Her husband was able to leave after she had left. He took a car and 4 dogs which might have helped his escape.

Before leaving Boryspil (near Kiev), I visited my friend who opened a small café in our city. One lady came in to buy coffee. I could hear that they spoke about a soldier. I asked her if she has someone in the front. Then she shared a story about her brother: "Just two months ago, he left for the war. I offered him a small cross but he, at the beginning, didn't want to take it as he was not much of a believer. In the end, he took it. Today, he called me and, showing the cross, said to me: 'He saved my life. The battle was terrible and I remained alive. Thank you!' Sharing her story, she was moved to tears!

Traveling to Zaporizhzhia by train, I observed the people on the platforms. There were many soldiers getting on the train. At one small station, I saw a mother saying goodbye to her very young son – a soldier. I saw how she was trying to keep herself composed and not cry. But the pain and worries were present on her face. As the son turned to board the train, the mother's hand was making a big sign of the cross. He left with his mother's blessing!

During this time of Lent, as we reflect on Jesus' suffering and see all the suffering in our wounded world, may our hearts be moved with compassion. Not only to those who are far away but also towards those who are living with us, who are looking for our presence, who are hungry for a good word, listening ear, or a smiling face. Every one of us has something to offer to the world so that it becomes more humane!

Sr Maria Marta Przywara, SSpS  
24.02.2024 Kyiv, Boryspil



Greetings from Sr. Maria Sleziak, SSPS,

I worked with children, youth, and adults. For thirteen years, I served in a canteen for the poor and homeless. Ukraine is a beautiful country, with many green forests and steppes. The people are very kind and hospitable. Ukrainian cuisine is a bit different, soup, potatoes or some kind of hot dish. In terms of religious denominations, the majority of people are Orthodox Christians.

Since 2014, there has been war in the eastern part of Ukraine. In 2017, as a volunteer, I went to the East for a month to help people who were already suffering from the Russians. For the first time I experienced the taste of terrible war and suffering. Children and adults were hiding in cellars during the attacks. I remember one time we were in one of the schools with Sr. Halina Madej and shells started flying. The school was shaking and I was frightened. The children asked: "Are you afraid?" "Yes!" I replied, and they said, "We are not afraid anymore. We are used to it!" At the time, I didn't know the worst was yet to come!

**24 February 2022** The Russian forces completely invaded our land. The war started throughout Ukraine. I was in Ireland at the time studying English.

I quickly returned to Ukraine. The Lord God showed me that it is necessary to be with the people who are suffering. Many people from Ukraine went abroad, searching for a safe place for them and their

children. Many have remained. We are praying, because now as I write this letter, the war continues. Many people are missing. There are daily bombings and many cities in Ukraine are completely destroyed. It is Lent. In Boryspil, near Kiev, apart from the frequent sirens and sounds of explosions, it is relatively quiet. The Russian military is occupying Ukrainian territory. But, in us there is hope and faith in God's mercy!

Thanks to all of you, my dear ones, for your prayers and sacrifices. The Lord Jesus gives us strength. We help as much as we can. We send parcels to areas we cannot reach personally. We help military families and refugees. In many cities of Ukraine, including Boryspil, there are people who have lost everything. It is very hard for them with this reality. Often they no longer have hope for a better tomorrow. We talk to them. Sometimes we just have coffee or tea together. They feel better! They feel that someone is there, that they are no longer alone with their suffering. I wish you could see the faces of the children and adults when they receive food, clothing, and toys through you!

The Ukrainian people are grateful to you for the support they are receiving. I don't know what will happen tomorrow! I don't know when the time will come that the Russians will stop bombing Ukraine! But I know one thing for sure, God is with us, with our Nation, and for that I thank Him! Once again, I thank all of you, our Benefactors!



# Just Coffee Ministry

Mary Ellen Rivero,  
HSMA Member



*This article was written in response to the editor's invitation given to a group of women who were formed in SSpS spirituality. You can call us supporters, partners, associates, or alumnae. As baptized persons, we follow the prompts of the Holy Spirit to live in mission to the vulnerable where we are. I'm excited to share a ministry that's close to my heart and, honestly, I can't help but promote it to anyone and everyone.*

## **Brief History:**

Just Coffee (Café' Justo) is produced by a grower-owned cooperative in the coffee belt of Mexico—a region that supplies most of Arabica Coffee on the market. The Just Coffee roasting facility is located at the US-Mexican border near Douglas, Arizona and seeks customers and partners in the United States. To appreciate the significance of this program as a ministry, it is essential to understand coffee production and migration.

Coffee plants thrive in a warm climate, in the shade, with volcanic soil, on mountain slopes. These conditions are inaccessible to machinery. Consequently, every stage - planting, pruning, harvesting - is a manual process. Pickers collect the ripest “cherries” until their burlap bags weigh around 200 lbs. In Salvador-Urbina, where Just Coffee originates, pickers carry these heavy bags several kilometers to the grower's home. This labor-intensive process repeats daily for several weeks until the entire 3-5 acre parcel is harvested.

At home, “cherries” are put through the only machinery on the property—a huller—where the coffee bean is extracted and washed in a trough. The beans are then dried thoroughly. Given the afternoon rains, growers spread out the beans on a large cement slab at the back of their home at sunrise; rake them into a pile and cover them with a tarp before noon. This solar drying process





repeats for at least nine days. Once dried, the beans are packed in clean burlap sacks and sold. The grower receives a year's wages in one go.

As a commodity on the world market, coffee prices are volatile. The growers are at the bottom of the supply chain and are at the mercy of the "coyotes" or brokers. Usually, they receive less than \$1 per pound. Fair Trade offers some relief by guaranteeing growers a fixed price every year – in the \$3 range--but growers need to pay for this guarantee.

After purchase, the beans are shipped, roasted and sold to the consumer. The roaster gets the lion's share of the sale price even though the grower does the lion's share of the work.

### **The plight of the coffee growers:**

When coffee prices plummeted in the early 1990s, survival became a struggle for growers. They sent their young men north to find paying jobs to support their families. Some found work in factories along Mexico's northern border, while others paid "coyotes" to smuggle them into the United States for jobs.

Mark, a border minister, noticed a large influx of migrants from Chiapas living in Agua Prieta, Mexico, just across the border from Douglas, Arizona. When asked why they left their tropical homeland for the harsh Sonoran Desert, they shared their predicament. They were economic migrants.



### **Café' Justo Cooperativa Plan:**



In response, Mark partnered with an American businessman to develop a just business plan for a grower-owned and operated cooperative. If successful, the growers would receive a fair and fixed price for their labor. They would buy a roaster and operate the entire coffee production chain. The coop would be governed by a board of elected members who would set the coffee price. Every member would receive their share of coffee sales to be paid monthly. Mark and Tommy promised to find customers in the United States. The coop would not allow child labor and would only accept organic growers. To be honest, these growers couldn't afford chemical fertilizers or pesticides anyway. They use mixed planting to confuse the insects and leaf fall from the shade trees to fertilize the coffee plants.

Sounds great, doesn't it? But in reality, the plan was a tough sell. The growers were skeptical, fearing that the gringos would walk away with their coffee crop and never get paid. It required a high level of trust. Growers had been swindled before. After several personal visits with family, Mark and Tommy's integrity won them over. Of the many growers only a couple of dozen families were



willing to give it a try – including the matriarch of Ballinas-Sanchez family. Her son, Edmundo was one of 19 young men sent north to find supplemental work.

Fast-forward to twenty-one years later: the Café Justo Cooperativa has grown to 100 families thanks to increased organizational partners. Every 60 pounds of coffee sold supports a grower’s family for month. The cooperative built a well for the town’s water and their first-ever grade school, now that their children didn’t need to work.

When a fellow graduate from the Just Faith program organized monthly sales at our local parish, I volunteered immediately. It seemed like the best way to address the migration problem – by paying the growers a living wage which they earn, we eliminate the need to migrate and its resulting trauma. Workers stay on their beloved land with family. Finally, as a coffee-lover, I knew that direct-shipped coffee is the freshest on the market. The key to flavor is brew freshly roasted coffee. Just Coffee roasts and ships the coffee within a week of its order. My time spent on Just Coffee is 1-3 hours per month. Low energy – high impact – quality coffee! Win-win on both sides of the border.



Eventually, I learned how to order and inventory. A scholarship enabled me to join a week-long immersion experience in Agua-Prieta and Chiapas, Mexico where I stayed in the home of Edmundo, met the growers, learned firsthand about coffee and migration. Visiting migrant shelters, meeting the grower families, and seeing all aspects of coffee production transformed me into a knowledgeable enthusiast. It motivated me to help others to start up partnerships, to drive groups down to the Arizona-Mexico border and Just Coffee roasting facility, to talk about how easy it is to support this high-impact ministry.

Here comes the punch line: if you are interested in buying the coffee for yourself, visit [JustCoffee.org](http://JustCoffee.org). If you think your church would like to partner with the cooperative and get the wholesale price for the coffee, contact me at [maryellen.rivero@gmail.com](mailto:maryellen.rivero@gmail.com).





# THE GOD OF LOVE NEVER FAILS US!

Have you ever had a particular word follow you for weeks? In my room, I have a mug which has the words on it from 1Cor.13:7-8. "Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. LOVE NEVER FAILS." I don't really know when or how that mug came to me, but somehow it really spoke to me.

After being with a couple of friends who were going through painful divorces and others who had lost family members and friends in the violence on the Chicago streets, the words "Love Always Trusts" really struck me. As I looked at my own personal experiences, I realized that my trust level was a little low also. Do I really believe that love will always trust?

After just going through Holy Week and seeing what Jesus experienced when even his closest followers stayed at a distance when he was condemned and one even sold him out while some just withdrew in fear, the word trust came back to me. Where was their loving trust?

As we approach the Feast of Pentecost, we know that the Spirit of God is a healing Spirit that can help us persevere in the knowledge that God will never desert or abandon us. In fact, we know that God can help us overcome all of our lack of trust so that we can truly be those witnesses of God's love that we are meant to be. CAN I TRUST THAT GOD'S LOVE NEVER FAILS?

I think that I will keep my mug by my side. May the Holy Spirit help me to move more deeply into the trust that God has in me. THE LOVE OF THE SPIRIT WILL NEVER FAIL!

## PENTECOST SUNDAY NEWS

Please pray for our 10 Mission Partners who will make their commitment on Pentecost. Also, remember the 2 that have already been received.

*Sr. Pat Snider, GSpS*

Holy Spirit Missionary Association, Directress

# Celebrating our Jubilarians



Sr. Agathe Bramkamp, SSpS (60 Years)

Sr. Mary Joseph Hofschulte, SSpS (75 Years)

Sr. Margaret Kissani, SSpS (25 Years)

Sr. Margaret Anne Norris, SSpS (60 Years)

Sr. Carol Welp, SSpS (60 Years)

Congratulations to our Sisters on their respective Jubilees and gratitude to them for their lives devoted to witnessing and proclaiming the love of the Triune God.

## 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



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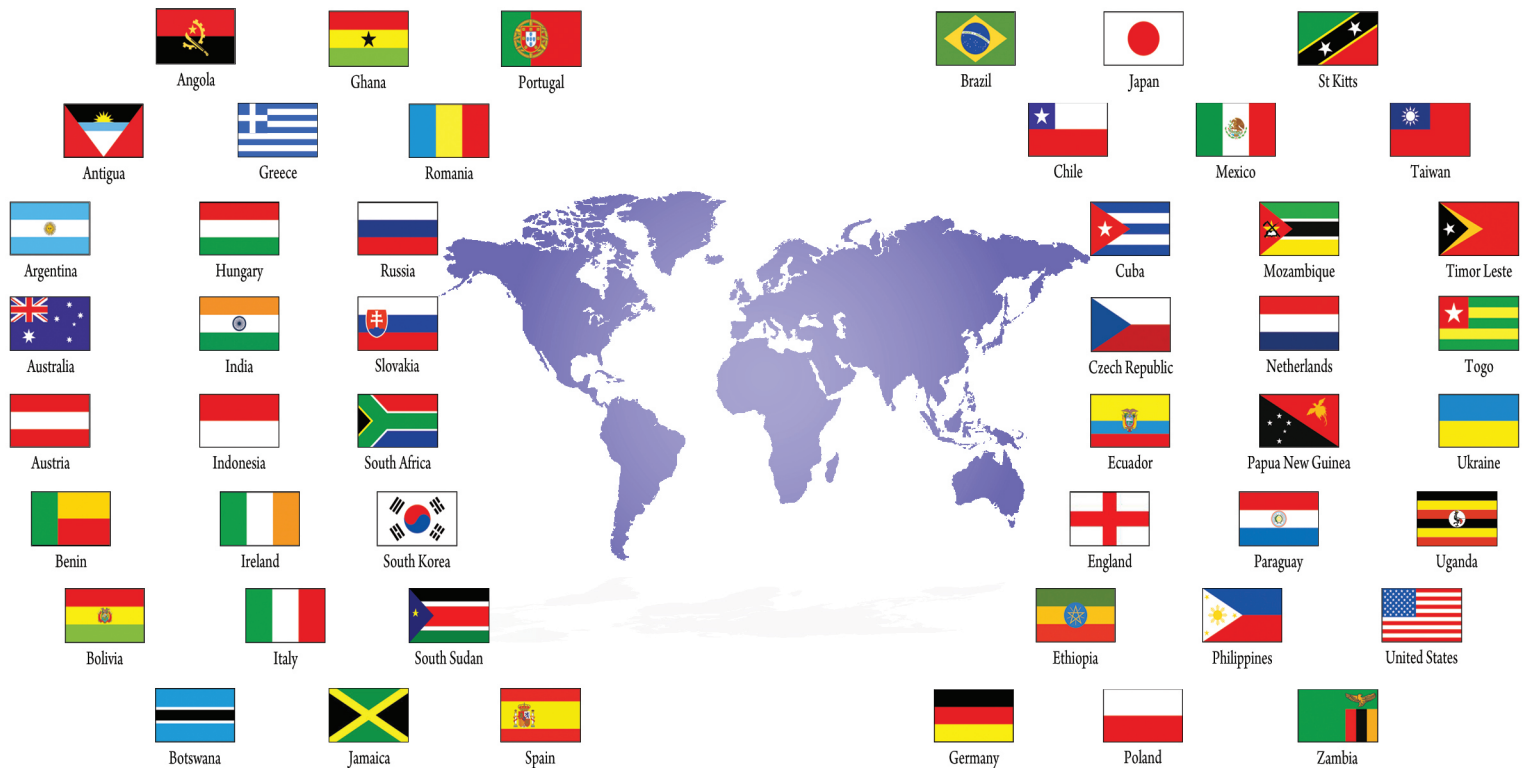


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The Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters are an international—intercultural community of 3,000 Catholic, religious women, serving in 48 countries. Missionary activities include pastoral work and catechesis, education, nursing and health care, social work,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



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