



# AHF in the world



Let's be a mission  
of the Holy Family!

## Dear Associates and Sisters,

Congratulations on the publication of the first AHF international newsletter! I am grateful that you have taken up the challenge of making this idea into a reality. There is so much good being done by AHF members in different parts of the world, and sharing your experiences can be a great inspiration to others. It can also be a great chance to learn from one another. So I encourage all of you to participate in this annual endeavor.

As we begin this new year of 2023, I offer wishes and a prayer for all of you who are a part of the Association of the Holy Family:

May the Lord bless you and your families with living hope, ever-deepening faith and enduring love.

May the start of another year be a reminder that God's graces are ever new, that "the favors of the LORD are not exhausted, His mercies are not spent; They are renewed each morning, so great is His faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22-23).

And may Jesus, Mary and Joseph guide and protect you as you strive, like them, to fulfill the will of the Father!

**Sr. Angela Marie Mazzeo**



# CSFN and AHF on the Synodal Path of the Church with Holy Family



On June 16-21, 2022, the first meeting of the AHF Directors and the AHF Representatives was held at our Generalate in Rome. Participants came from all the provinces in which the Association is located: the American, Australian, Belarusian, Filipino, Krakow, Warsaw,

Western European provinces. It was a special time. You can read about it on the website [www.nazarethfamily.org](http://www.nazarethfamily.org) under the AHF tab.

One of the fruits of this meeting is the creation of the AHF International Bulletin (many thanks to Bożenka and Janusz Malec, who undertook to prepare the first issue). It was the desire of all participants that we are one, that we get to know each other more, and no matter where we live, no matter what language, we feel that we belong to the same AHF at CSFN. The Association in every part of the world takes on a different face depending on culture, context, needs. We are characterized by diversity, which is united by the same goal, the same mission. In the spirit of the synodal path, we walk together. This was also the theme of the meeting: CSFN and AHF on the Synodal Path of the Church with Holy Family.

Blessed Francis Siedliska had a deep conviction that Nazareth should be immersed in the present current of the Church and respond to its actual needs. In one of her letters she wrote that: "Nazareth would be like a sentry looking for where the need is and going there".

At this time in the Church's history, we are all invited to listen to the Holy Spirit, to each other. Together with Blessed Mary of Jesus the Good Shepherd, let us look out "where the need is", and where and how we can spread the Kingdom of God's Love.

LISTENING is important in this journey. What is listening? Listening to God, to another person, to myself? Do I know how to listen? I want to share with you Pope Francis' Message for the 56th World Day of Social Communications on January 24, 2022. The theme of the Message is: "Listening with the ear of the heart". I wish each and every one of us, openness to the Holy Spirit and listening with the ear of the heart to what God is saying to us in our daily lives.

**Sr. Speranza Grzebielec**  
general coordinator of the AHF



The meeting held in Rome on June 16-21, 2022 under the theme "Nazareth Sisters and AHF on the synodal path of the Church with the Holy Family" was attended by 12 sisters, 16 representative of the AHF and nine children of Nazareth from 7 Nazareth provinces: Europe, Poland (Krakow and Warsaw provinces), Belarus, Philippines, Australia, USA. We were supported by 2 sisters translators and 2 sisters taking care of the children. Some of the meetings were also attended by sisters from the CSFN General Administration, together with Mother General Angela Marie Mazzeo.

# Listening with the ear of the heart

From the pages of Scripture we learn that listening means not only the perception of sound, but is essentially linked to the dialogical relationship between God and humanity. “Shema’ Israel - Hear, O Israel” (Dt 6:4), the opening words of the first commandment of the Torah, is continually reiterated in the Bible, to the point that Saint Paul would affirm that “faith comes through listening” (cf. Rom 10:17). The initiative, in fact, is God’s, who speaks to us, and to whom we re-



spond by listening to him. In the end, even this listening comes from his grace, as is the case with the newborn child who responds to the gaze and the voice of his or her mother and father. Among the five senses, the one favored by God seems to be hearing, perhaps because it is less invasive, more discreet than sight, and therefore leaves the human being more free.

Listening corresponds to the humble style of God. It is the action that allows God to reveal himself as the One who, by speaking, creates man and woman in his image, and by listening recognizes them as his partners in dialogue. God loves humanity: that is why he addresses his word to them, and why he “inclines his ear” to listen to them.

On the contrary, human beings tend to flee the relationship, to turn their back and “close their ears” so they do not have to listen.

On the one hand, then, God always reveals himself by communicating freely; and on the other hand, man and woman are asked to tune in, to be willing to listen. The Lord explicitly calls the human person to a covenant of love, so that they can fully become what they are: the image and likeness of God in his capacity to listen, to

welcome, to give space to others. Fundamentally, listening is a dimension of love.

This is why Jesus calls his disciples to evaluate the quality of their listening. “Take heed then how you hear” (Lk 8:18): this is what he exhorts them to do after recounting the parable of the sower, making it understood that it is not enough simply to listen, but that it is necessary to listen well. Only those who receive the word with an “honest and good” heart and keep it faithfully bear the fruit of life and salvation (cf. Lk 8:15). It is only by paying attention to whom we listen, to what we listen, and to how we listen that we can grow in the art of communicating, the heart of which is not a theory or a technique, but the “openness of heart that makes closeness possible” (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 171).

We all have ears, but many times even those with perfect hearing are unable to hear another person. In fact, there is an interior deafness worse than the physical one. Indeed, listening concerns the whole person, not just the sense of hearing. The true seat of listening is the heart. Though he was very young, King Solomon proved himself wise because he asked the Lord to grant him a “listening heart” (cf. 1 Kings 3:9). Saint Augustine used to encourage listening with the heart, to receive words not outwardly through the ears, but spiritually in our hearts: “Do not have your heart in your ears, but your ears in your heart”. Saint Francis of Assisi exhorted his brothers to “incline the ear of the heart”.

Therefore, when seeking true communication, the first type of listening to be rediscovered is listening to oneself, to one’s truest needs, those inscribed in each person’s inmost being. And we can only start by listening to what makes us unique in creation: the desire to be in relationship with others and with the Other. We are not made to live like atoms, but together.

## Listening as a condition of good communication

What specifically makes communication good and fully human is listening to the person in front of us, face to face, listening to the other

person whom we approach with fair, confident, and honest openness. In reality, in many dialogues we do not communicate at all. We are simply waiting for the other person to finish speaking in order to impose our point of view. In these situations, as philosopher Abraham Kaplan notes, dialogue is a duologue: a monologue in two voices. In true communication, however, the “I” and the “you” are both “moving out”, reaching out to each other.

Listening is therefore the first indispensable ingredient of dialogue and good communication. Communication does not take place if listening has not taken place. But why face the exertion of listening? A great diplomat of the Holy See, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, used to speak of the “martyrdom of patience” needed to listen and be heard in negotiations with the most difficult parties, in order to obtain the greatest possible good in conditions of limited freedom. But even in less difficult situations, listening always requires the virtue of patience, together with the ability to allow oneself to be surprised by the truth, even if only a fragment of truth, in the person we are listening to. Only amazement enables know-



ledge. I think of the infinite curiosity of the child who looks at the world around them with wide-open eyes. Listening with this frame of mind — the wonder of the child in the awareness of an adult — is always enriching because there will always be something, however small, that I can learn from the other person and allow to bear fruit in my own life.

### Listening to one another in the Church

In the Church, too, there is a great need to listen to and to hear one another. It is the most-

precious and life-giving gift we can offer each other. Christians have forgotten that the ministry of listening has been committed to them by him who is himself the great listener and whose work they should share. “We should listen with the ears of God that we may speak the word of God”. Thus, the Protestant theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer reminds us that the first service we owe to others in communion consists in listening to them. Whoever does not know how to listen to his brother or sister will soon no longer be able to listen to God either.

The most important task in pastoral activity is the “apostolate of the ear” – to listen before speaking, as the Apostle James exhorts: “Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak” (1:19). Freely giving some of our own time to listen to people is the first act of charity.

A synodal process has just been launched. Let us pray that it will be a great opportunity to listen to one another. Communion, in fact, is not the result of strategies and programs, but is built in mutual listening between brothers and sisters. As in a choir, unity does not require uniformity, monotony, but the plurality and variety of voices, polyphony. At the same time, each voice in the choir sings while listening to the other voices and in relation to the harmony of the whole. This harmony is conceived by the composer, but its realization depends on the symphony of each and every voice.

With the awareness that we participate in a communion that precedes and includes us, we can rediscover a symphonic Church, in which each person is able to sing with his or her own voice, welcoming the voices of others as a gift to manifest the harmony of the whole that the Holy Spirit composes.

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#### Pope Francis

Fragments from the Message for the 56th World Day of Social Communications, 2022

# Growing in faith with The Holy Family

Already from the very topic, three important key words emerge for us: Holy Family, faith and the way.

The Holy Family of Nazareth is a model of a community that lives in the fullness of love and faith. We fix our gaze on Jesus of Nazareth, "Of all men you are the most handsome" (cf. Ps 45:3), on Mary, who did the Father's will with zeal for obedience, on St. Joseph, who "without hesitation surrendered his freedom and his marital happiness to God's plan, accepting the place assigned to him in the family". From Him we learn surrender to God.

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church we find the following definition of faith: "Faith is man's attitude towards God. By believing, man voluntarily acknowledges the existence of God and enters into a personal relationship with Him".

Through faith, man surrenders his mind and will completely to God. Sacred Scripture calls man's response to God the "obedience of faith" (cf. Rom 1:5; 16; 26).

Faith is a process, it is a path sometimes uphill, sometimes downhill, which always leads to a specific goal. We are never alone on this journey of faith.

'Although man can forget God or reject him, He never ceases to call every man to seek him, so as to find life and happiness. But this search for God demands of man every effort of intellect, a sound will, "an upright heart", as well as the witness of others who teach him to seek God.(cf.CCC 30)

Faith is not an addition to life, it is life itself. So I can say: "I live the way I live because I am a believer." My faith is the way through life; life

that is not simple and easy for anyone, especially nowadays. Faith, however, is not a magic wand that eliminates all the difficulties in life to make it easy and pleasant. In faith, however, man finds strength and light to survive even the most difficult moments in his life. God, who is always the same, wants to constantly meet us and lead us along the paths of faith.

Let us look at the faith journey of the Holy Family!

We all know that Jesus was a believer and He put His faith into practice.

First, let us look together at Mary, the one who is all beautiful. It was her who was chosen by God as a guide for each of us on the path of faith. At the moment of Annunciation, Mary receives an even more astonishing message - the proposal to become the mother of the Messiah. Faced with such a perspective, Mary does not express any doubts, she only asks how virginity can be reconciled

with the role of mother. Having heard the angel's response pointing to God's omnipotence working through the Spirit, Mary humbly and generously expresses her consent.

At this unique moment in human history, faith plays a decisive role. St. Augustine rightly writes about it: "Christ is received and conceived by faith. First, faith appears in the Virgin's heart, and then the mother's womb becomes fruitful".

Throughout her life, until the last trial, when Jesus, her Son, died on the cross, Mary's faith did not waver. Mary did not stop believing "in the fulfillment" of God's word. For this reason the Church venerates in Mary the purest fulfillment of faith.



Joseph is honest with God and with himself. He relies only on Him and His word, therefore his faith is growing. He believed that God had spoken to him in the night. He believed that God was omnipotent, and that God would keep His word, even though his "enlightened" mind was telling him that everything he believed in was ridiculous, beyond belief. He did not yield to reason. He listened to his soul (heart) enlightened by the Word. This is how unwavering faith is born. It comes from listening to the Word, not from your own thoughts.

Joseph believed in what he heard in his heart. Faith touches hearts and this is how Joseph lived it through his humility and silence. Faith is a whole - it has one heart, one center: JESUS CHRIST. It is Joseph's journey of faith, which was not a single miraculous experience illuminated by an angelic voice, that is close to our hearts. His faith is born in the dark night and goes through everyday events that sometimes turn back again into the dark night. Joseph's faith is born on the rock of the Word, on which he is able to lean even in the night, full of nightmares and temptations. Joseph believes not because an angel came to him, but an angel came to him because Joseph believed God.

Such faith yields perfect obedience to the will of God. Despite the troubles, St. Joseph remained a man of prayer, openness and obedience to the word of God. He was also faithful to the love of Jesus and Mary till the end of his life. He wants to teach us such faith. Faith is a movement of the heart - this is how St. Joseph lived it through his humility and silence.

Believing does not mean finding easy and comforting solutions. The faith we see in St. Joseph is a faith that does not look for shortcuts, but faces "with open eyes" what happens to him, taking personal responsibility for it.

Let us come back to our journey with the Holy Family. This family was constantly on the move. After all, Jesus himself said about himself - "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Pilgrimage, being on the way, should lead us to seeking and imitating Jesus, as did Mary

and Joseph on their way to Jerusalem. Every year Jesus' parents went to the Temple in Jerusalem to fulfill the Law concerning the purification and the Passover. Such pious and obedient practice of Joseph and Mary was what is called "temple piety," that is, faithful observance of the Law in going to the temple "to see the face of God," to offer gifts, to attend worship, and to recite the psalms. The pilgrimage of the Holy Family reflects their spiritual growth to fulfill God's will, dynamics of faith, walking in darkness, but always holding on to the hand of God. It is worth

asking yourself: when was the last time I was on a pilgrimage? Alone? With my loved ones? Was it on foot or by bus? When have I visited a holy place where the Lord Himself bestows His favors? Am I cultivating this beautiful tradition?

Let us look at Mary, who was constantly on her way to another person - as the scene of the Visitation tells us; she goes to serve her relative Elizabeth. Mary persevered until

the end in the way following her Beloved, the only Son. It was her who stood by the Cross. This 'fiat' spoken during the Annunciation was fulfilled to the end - when she was standing by the cross. She was a faithful, persistent Disciple.

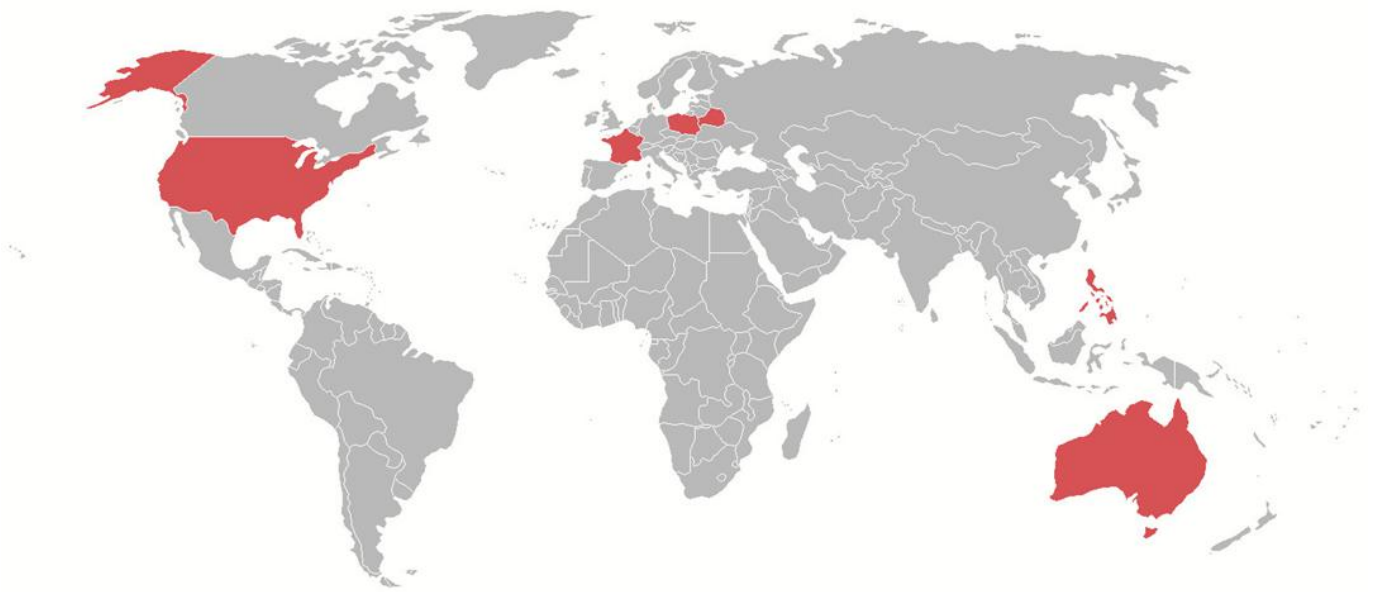
St. Joseph was able to say 'his fiat' in every circumstance of his life when God, through an angel, told him to take Mary to his home, and when God revealed his plans to him in a dream. He faithfully followed the path towards fulfilling the will of God, and in the company of Jesus and Mary he went to the HOUSE of Eternal Love.

### Sr. Maksymiliana Dojcz

#### Questions for personal reflection:

- Do you talk about faith in your family? How often? Who takes the initiative?
- What do you consider to be a clear statement of Christian faith in your family life?
- What deepens your faith, what weakens it?





# Holy Family Province, USA



Founded in: 1980  
 Director: Sr. Maria Magdalena Rybak  
 Sisters engaged: 17  
 Groups: 16  
 Members: 220  
 Women: 200  
 Men: 20  
 Married couples: 18  
 The children of Nazareth: -  
 Sisters engaged: 17  
 Groups of the AHF in Holy Family Province by the Area:  
 Midwest Area - 1  
 Southwest Area - 3  
 Mid Atlantic Area - 6  
 Great Lakes Area - 3  
 New England Area - 3



## United in Love

### Midwest Area

The Midwest Associates of the Holy Family have hearts full of gold and love beyond all telling. Although their age and abilities have limited them in their activities, they readily respond to the call to "serve," "to be mission-minded," and to spread the Kingdom of God's Love to their families and friends. The Covid

pandemic definitely limited us in our possibilities of meeting together, sharing ideas and planning creatively. However, we still have managed to communicate by phone, by email, by ZOOM, etc. to keep in touch and to allow the spirit of the Holy Family to stay alive.

As an outcome of our past two meetings, we have offered several suggestions:

- o to meet occasionally in various areas of the city so that we may reach more people who may have a desire to be involved in the AHF;



- o to begin a "book club" with reading, reflections and discussion on spiritual topics - other than what we discuss at our formal meetings; the first of these is from the life of St. Therese of Lisieux - "Twelve Little Ways to Transform Your Heart" by Susan Muto;
- o to become involved (as an AHF group) in the outreach programs already set up in parishes;
- o to continue our spiritual development according to the guidelines/directives set up by the Congregation for members of the AHF.



*Sr. Michael Marie Franzak and Cindy Michelini  
Associate from Des Plaines, IL*

**New England Area**

The members of the Worcester (MA) Associates of the Holy Family, of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth added a remembrance request for the Saturday Mass, November 18, 2022, in honor of Blessed Frances Siedliska's Feast Day. The parish has been supporting the CSFN Sisters in Ukraine directly as Pastor Fr. Ryszard Polek is in touch with Sister Beata from Ukraine. Members attended Mass as a group and had available Holy Family Chaplets and prayer cards of Mother Foundress. Associate Charlene Zimkiewicz spoke briefly before Mass about the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth and the Associates of the Holy Family; the Sisters of the

Holy Family had staffed the parish School Saint Mary's for about 100 years.

Our yearly Advent Project of signing & sending cards to the Sisters in the Eastern US and homebound parishioners of Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish in Worcester was part of our December 4th meeting- we signed about 60 cards! In addition, we collected new and slightly used winter clothing items to donate to Abby's House, a Shelter for Homeless Women and Children in Worcester that has been in operation since 1976.

Our regular meeting will continue with prayer and Scripture studies, and we look forward to welcoming new members.



*Associates from Worcester*

**Mid-Atlantic Area**

Peg Wierzbicki has been an Associate at Our Lady of Calvary Parish, Philadelphia, for the past seven years since the group's founding and served as our treasurer. Peg has a generous spirit, and she and her husband, Joe, have been involved with the Refugee Project and Sister Virginia. Peg and Joe have functioned as a team, using their skills to assist in the transformation of an empty convent into a transitional housing dwelling for men and women who are asylum seekers and are in the process of becoming American citizens. Two of our latest refugee women from Afghanistan have called Joe and Peg their "grandmom and grandpop". Like all of us, relationships matter most in assisting others in need. Peg and Joe go beyond a once-a-week commitment and have reached out when called upon, opening their

hearts in a true Nazareth Family Spirit of service to the poor.



*Peg and her husband Joe*

The Sisters of the Holy Family Province value the Association of the Holy Family, whose members’ hearts are on fire with our Nazareth charism and spirit. The Associates believe that while the Sisters are no longer present in some of their parishes and ministries, their spirit and charism continue to live on through the presence and ministry of the Associates in their respective parishes.

The Associates collaborate with the Sisters for special events, and they work tirelessly responding to whatever the situation may be (driving, planning events, shopping, etc). They want to be involved in the projects in which we are involved and they do that wholeheartedly.

We invite our Associates to pray with us in our chapels/convents. That is probably the time that we are most connected. In those times of prayer, they are able to develop a deep love for God and strengthen their desire to journey with us to proclaim the Kingdom of God wherever they go – to their families, to their workplaces, to their own parishes.

Together, we are NAZARETH! We are proud and grateful for our heritage and the gift each of us brings to the Church.

The Spirit leads us to continue planning and dreaming together in order to discern the areas to which we are called – usually responding to the needs of the community and/or church at that particular time.

The Sisters work closely with the Associates as their mentors, teachers, and spiritual companions. However, the AHF Leadership is designed in such a

way that the Associates will be able to assume those leadership responsibilities when the Sisters are no longer able to be with them. Once again, we journey together always with the Holy Family as our model and the life examples of Blessed Mary of Jesus the Good Shepherd, our Blessed Martyrs as well as all of the other Sisters who have walked with our Associates through the years. They remember those Sisters very well and often speak about their first and many encounters with Nazareth throughout their lives.

**Sr. Maria Magdalena Rybak**



*Associates during their meeting in Monroe, CT*



*Sr. Maria Kruszewski and Sr. Madeleine Rybicki with the Associates from Pittsburgh (PA).*

# Holy Spirit Province, Australia

Founded in: 1987  
 Director: Sr. Rita Marie Apura  
 Sisters engaged: 3  
 Groups: 3  
 Members: 35  
 Women: 25  
 Men: 10  
 Married couples: 6  
 The Children of Nazareth: -



## Regina - new membership of the AHF



On 6 November 2022, at Our Lady of Grace Parish Centre, Duncraig, WA, in Australia, we celebrated Regina Dixon's acceptance to full Association membership. It was a significant and long-awaited occasion in the life of Regina Dixon, who has been associated with the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth for many years. Sisters Helen Tereba, Anita Litwin, and Emilia Smolak

joined Sr. Rita Marie Apura, Director of the Association of the Holy Family, with joy and gratitude as they welcomed and accepted Regina into full membership. Regina Dixon's daughter witnessed the special afternoon prayer and acceptance ceremony.

**Sr. Rita Marie Apura**

## A pilgrimage to Penrose Park

On Saturday, 29th of October 2022, around 40 Associates, Sisters, and friends ventured on



the long-awaited trip to Berrima, which had been postponed twice over the last two years due to COVID-19. We left Marayong at 8.30 am on this lovely fresh spring morning, all rugged up as cooler weather was predicted at our destination in Penrose Park, Berrima. Sr Rita led us into prayer and explained the order of the day

while welcoming the various groups from four surrounding parishes. It was a pleasant 90-minute journey with intervals of hymn singing and guitar playing by Sr Christine and Sr



Jeremiah. After a pit stop at McDonald's, we arrived at Penrose Park, admiring the stillness and peace of the beautiful landscape.

The Shrine of Our Lady of Mercy, commonly known as Penrose Park (located in the Southern Highlands, NSW), is a renowned place of veneration of the replica of the Icon of Our Lady of Jasna Góra, known as the Black Madonna. The



order of St. Paul the First Hermit, known as the Pauline Fathers, who have been the custodians of the original Icon of the Black Madonna for more than 630 years, minister the Shrine. Fr. Zachary Lewis, OSPPE, celebrated the Mass, followed by the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and recitation of the Rosary. After individual reflection and admiring the new improvements and additions to this beautiful

sanctuary, we all gathered for lunch, sharing



food and friendship. Following lunch, Fr. Zachary gave a talk on 'Mary our Mother - Model and Example' in the Church. We were enriched and enlightened by Fr. Zachary and Sr. Rita's sharing of their experience in encountering Christ.

We spent the last hour visiting the international shrines on the way down to the replica cove of Our Lady of Fatima and the Tomb of Jesus. Some individuals even had a blessed experience of seeing a miracle.



Thank you, Sr. Rita Apura, Associates Director, for organizing this pilgrimage. We pray that the blessings and graces received through this special pilgrimage may enrich us with a more intimate encounter with Christ.

**Maria De Carlo, AHF**

# Jesus the Good Shepherd Province, France, Europe

Founded in: 1991  
 Director: Sr. Luiza Chrzęstowska  
 Sisters engaged: 5  
 Groups: 1

Members: 32  
 Women: 19  
 Men: 13  
 Married couples: 13  
 The Children of Nazareth: 11



## The time of God's gifts

The pilgrimage of the icon of the Holy Family began on October 16, 2022, and will last until October 2023.

Where did the idea of peregrination come from, and why now? The visitation of the icon of the Holy Family is a response to the request of the AHF members who care for each other and want to deepen their spiritual life. If such a Guest as the Holy Family in the icon comes to the house, the hearts beat more "festively"; there is time for prayer, both the common and the personal. In addition, "friends are invited"



- there is more prayer, more love, and better everyday life. The visit of the icon of the Holy Family is a spiritual event for the whole family, a testimony of faith and its strengthening. We are glad that the icon of the Holy Family,



which travels "from family to family," is received with great devotion. We all need the example of the life of the Holy Family of Nazareth, its care and blessing.



**Santa Claus came to the grown-ups and the little ones**

Advent retreats are already a permanent tradition of our French AHS community. During last year's Advent retreat, there was a moment where all groups: parents, youth, and children met to "share joy. This year, Santa Claus came and was very generous to everyone. Our "heavenly Guest" not only gave gifts but also instructed, asked questions and encouraged us to be better.

**“It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20, 35)**

Advent is the time to prepare hearts for the birth of the Lord. It is a time of spiritual joy. This joy grows when we share it with others. AHF members and friends have a tradition of preparing Christmas packages for those who expect and receive nothing. This year, the packages went to the Social Welfare House in Łuków, Poland.

**Sr. Luiza Chrzęstowska**



# Most Holy Name of Jesus Province, Warsaw, Poland

Founded in: 1996  
 Director: Sr. Michaela Pietrzak  
 Sisters engaged: 44  
 Groups: 17

Members: 240  
 Women: 138  
 Men: 102  
 Married couples: 100  
 The children of Nazareth: 177



## At the pace of the heart ... and the calendar

The Association of the Holy Family in the Warsaw Province has developed dynamically in recent years. This achievement is due to many Sisters and other members and friends of AHF who live the mission and charism of Nazareth. They testify to Christian values where they live and work, thus attracting other families.



Twenty new members joined the Association in 2022.

In January and February 2022, we held three series of winter retreats. It is a particular time when we can combine winter activity (winter sports) with spiritual rest with God, listening to what He wants to tell us. One of the participants recalls this time:

The topic of reflection prepared for us was "Jesus present in our needs and shortcomings." Throughout the retreat, I had the impression that Jesus was coming to me, wanting to be with me. With each passing day, He touched a small part of my heart. Being

able to adore the Lord in silence helped me discover myself. It seemed that reflection on a short piece of the Scripture penetrated my mind and heart. After our meditation, it was time for group sharing, followed by the Eucharist. Each day ended with family adoration when together with the children, we could worship before the Blessed Sacrament. How much humility and simplicity are contained in the simple requests and thanks expressed by children". (Hubert)

March, we entrust our families to the tender care of St. Joseph. For the past fifteen years, we have met on the first Saturday of March at the National Sanctuary of St. Joseph in Kalisz. On that day, a speaker gives a spiritual conference, and we enjoy time together (agape). Still, the most



important thing is the opportunity to entrust our families to St. Joseph.

For the Nazareth Sisters and AHF members, Żdżary and Roszkowa Wola are significant places. During the April pilgrimage, we thank God for the gift of the beatification of Mother Foundress and all the graces received through the intercession of Bl. Frances Siedliska.

May and June are the months when we hold weekend workshops. In 2022, we participated in mountain hiking in the Tatra Mountains, called "hiking with the Holy Family," held workshops for mothers with daughters, and provided a Lectio Divina session. An international meeting of directors and representatives of AHF in Rome was an important event for us in June 2022.

Our main events of the year occur during the summer holidays when we meet for a series of week retreats. There were eight series last year. Among them, e.g., a pilgrimage from Kalisz(Sanctuary of St. Joseph) to Jasna Góra in Częstochowa, canoeing, and family retreats. Here is one testimony that reflects the atmosphere of that time:

The retreat was when everyone could stop and get away from everyday life and strengthen their soul and body. It was also a special time for my family and me because, with great joy in our hearts, we formally became part of AHF on August 1st. On that day, we also received great spiritual support not only from our Guardian Angel – Nazareth Sisters - but also from Bl. Martyr Sisters from Nowogródek, whose memory fell on that day. (Agata)

May the Holy Family be praised; for all members and friends of AHF, for each Nazareth Sister, and for our time together.

**Sr. Michaela Pietrzak**

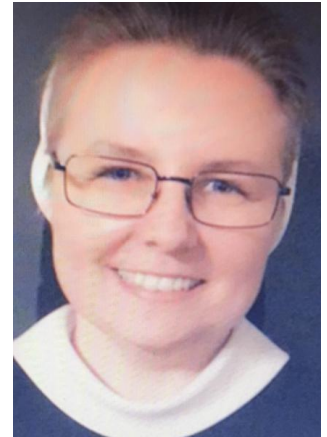




# Most Holy Name of Mary Province, Krakow, Poland

Founded in: 2000  
 Director: Sr. Elżbieta Kuczmarzka  
 Sisters engaged: 7  
 Groups: 8

Members: 103  
 Women: 59  
 Men: 44  
 Married couples: 41  
 The children of Nazareth: 94



## Meeting with Mother General at the pilgrimage to Jasna Góra



The pilgrimage of families to Jasna Góra has been a central formation event of the year for several years. During this meeting, we can pray together

and meet families from all AHF communities in our Province. This year's pilgrimage was exceptional due to the presence of Mother General Angela Marie Mazzeo, who accompanied us with her presence and prayer.

"Watch, stand firm in the faith, be courageous and be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13) - this is the purpose and the fruit of our spiritual meeting with our Mother Mary.

## The new members of AHF



Last year, we accepted five married couples, giving us 103 AHS members in the Cracow Province.

The admission ceremony to AHF during the Eucharist, celebrated in places other than our chapels, is an opportunity to witness Christian values to

other families. This year, three of the five married couples had their admission ceremony during the pilgrimage to Jasna Góra. After such a meeting, other people are always asking about the AHF communities and the pledges made by the candidates. How vital is testimony today when there is a question about the legitimacy of building lasting sacramental marriages and healthy families? The publicly declared desire to live Christian values and proclaim the Kingdom of God's Love is a moment that makes others reflect on their own lives.

### **The Rosary of AHF families for the Sisters of Nazareth**

Since October 7, 2022, Karolina and Kamil Jaworski, together with the Gdynia AHF community, initiated a rosary for all AHF communities of our Province and the Sisters. Families join on the zoom platform every first Wednesday of the month and pray the Rosary. The Sisters also join this prayer.

### **Advent weekends for women and men**

Since 2022, next to Lenten weekends for women and men, we have organized Advent weekends. It took place in north Poland, in Gdansk. Weekends are popular because during them, women in the company of other women, and men in the company of other men, can listen to conferences on spiritual development. The uniqueness of those meetings is that they can share their observations on building a relationship with God in a specific, feminine, and masculine way. This makes them leave enriched and inspired by the testimonies of others.



### **Sr. Elżbieta Kuczmarska**



# Blessed Martyrs Province, Belarus

Founded in: 2009  
 Director: Sr. Marianna Aleszczyk  
 Sisters engaged: 7  
 Groups: 7  
 Members: 31  
 Women: 19  
 Men: 12  
 Married couples: 12  
 The Children of Nazareth: 19



## Second Forum for AHF families in Belarus

In September 2022, the second nationwide meeting of AHF members and friends took place in Iwieniec near Minsk. It is a bottom-up initiative resulting from the fact that AHF communities from different cities want to get to know each other and share their experiences. Not only do they want to create and develop

local groups, but they also want to build awareness of the Association as a whole Body, as a part of the Church.

Thirty-seven families gathered for the meeting in Iwieniec. Representatives from all AHF communities in Belarus came. The main topic of the meeting was "Responsibility." During the day, families had time for sharing in groups and, of course, time for prayer and having fun



together. CSFN Sisters and priests who serve in local communities also attended this meeting. It was a unique opportunity for everyone to get to know each other better.

The first forum of AHF families in Belarus was in 2021 in Nowogródek. It was a one-day meeting aimed at integrating communities, activating members, and strengthening cooperation between the AHF and the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

**Artiom Tkaczuk, AHF**

### 13 years of AHF activity in Belarus

Currently, the Association in Belarus has 27 members, and about 350 people participate in the formation program. Seven people attended the first meeting of families in 2009. The Seven



local AHF Belarus groups are in Grodno, Lida, Molodeczno, Minsk, Smorgoń, Głębokie, and Iwieniec. Almost all our pastoral work with families is in the sisters' workplace. The AHF director, Sr Marianna Aleszczyk, commutes to the meetings in Smorgonia and Głębokie, where CSFN Sisters do not have their own house, nor do they minister.

**Sr. Marianna Aleszczyk**

### Nazareth in Warsaw for families from Belarus

Due to the ongoing political crisis and increasing repression, several hundred thousand people have left Belarus, including thousands of families. In cooperation with CSFN Sisters from Warsaw, members of the AHF from Minsk organize meetings of the Association for

Belarusian families staying in Poland. From October to December 2022, dozens of people, about 15 families, took part in the formation meetings.

Meetings of Polish and Belarusian AHF families take place at the same time. This facilitates the organization of the meeting, including looking after children while parents are working in groups. A priest from Belarus serves the Belarusian group. The group uses materials



prepared for the second year of formation in AHF entitled "Following Jesus of Nazareth."

The joint initiative turned out to be very successful and necessary. During group work, families share similar experiences of leaving their country against their will and similar problems and challenges they have to face in their new situation. Even two families living in Lublin and Wrocław attend the meetings, which is a big challenge because it takes about 2 or 3 hours by car one way.

**Artiom Tkaczuk, AHF**



# Mary of Nazareth Province, Phillippines

Founded in: 2010  
 Director: Sr. Mary Michael Banquil  
 Sisters engaged: 6  
 Groups: 6  
 Members: 85  
 Women: 62  
 Men: 23  
 Married couples: 15  
 The Children of Nazareth: -



## 50 years of married life

We were married on December 18, 1972 at the Parish of Queen of All Saints, Balele, Tanauan, Batangas. We had been practicing Catholics, praying daily the Holy Rosary, and attend Mass every Sunday, living with our meager income from farming and employment. Legion of Mary is our first community.

## Our children

Dario M. Huelgas was born on October 25, 1973, was baptized and entered school in 1978 at the Our Lady of Fatima, Tanauan, Batangas. He continued his studies until he finished Bachelor of Science in Agri-Business Management at the University of the Philippines, Los Banos, Laguna. He had finished Doctor of Philosophy in Agriculture and now pursuing his Post-Doctoral Degree. He was married to Glenda Rivera-Huelgas, a School Teacher. They were gifted with two children, Angela Gabrielle Dominique taking up Speech Therapy, and Darius Edward Xebastian, Grade 6 pupil.

Darwin M. Huelgas was born on December 23, 1974, was baptized and entered school in 1979 and was able to finish Bachelor of Arts in Commerce at the La Salle lipa. Married to Ermalee Nuque an Accountant and were blessed with a son Jose Carlos Miguel N. Huelgas, now a Certified Nurse. The family is Australian Citizen now.

Practicing Natural Family Planning since 1979, a third son was given to us. We planned to have another child after 8 years, and Jose Dennis M. Huelgas was born on October 4, 1982. He finished Bachelor of Science in Business Administration at the Cavite State University, was married to Mylene Zapanta from Cavite. They are both working and were blessed with 2 children: Jillian Moises Z. Huelgas, a Grade 8 student and Margaux Jade M. Huelgas, a Grade 1 pupil. They are staying in Amadeo, Cavite.

After having three boys, we requested to have a girl. Following the Billings Ovulation Method and with prayers and Faith in God, we achieved our dream of having a daughter, Anna Marie M. Huelgas. She was born on August 2, 1986. She fi-



nished Instrumentation and Safety Engineer, still single working at the JG Summit, a Petrochem Company.

We lived the Natural Family Planning, which we coined as Natural Family Way of Life, reaching other families to follow God’s will in raising a family.

Joan Marie M. Huelgas was born after more than 2 years, August 28, 1988. She finished Mechatronics Engineering, working at the ZIYA Company. Still single and living with us. She supports us in our daily life.

Josephine M. Huelgas was born on Feb. 22, 1992, finished Hotel and Restaurant Management at the First Asian Institute of Technology and Humanity, now an OFW in Canada working with the MCDO. She has a son out of wedlock, so she is a single mom. Her son, ZAC is living with us, is a very special child, one of God’s favorite being a special one. He has autism syndrome. Josephine is applying for a permanent residency in Canada to support her son.

And the youngest, Lourdes M. Borillo, born on September 22, 1993, finished Bachelor of Science in Computer, has already a son and currently carrying her second child. She was married to Franklin Borillo. They are both working at the PKI, a company partnership of Japan and Philippines.

Thru faith and constant prayerful life, we were able to survive all the sacrifices and experienced happiness in our life. We have very rich experiences with our loving children and other families we have reached out. To strengthen our faith and commitment to God, we never stop serving Him through sharing our experiences. Bringing the HOLY FAMILY to families is one of our simple evangelization. Usually, when couples have issues they come to us for counselling. We are not doing this alone. God is always with us.

During the pandemic, we stayed at home at attend meetings thru virtual means. However, to give others chance to lead and serve, we resigned from all our positions in the Church. Being resigned did not stop us to serve, thru prayers and online activities.

We are very GRATEFUL to GOD for giving us this opportunity to experience celebrating the GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY BEING STILL TOGETHER. WE REALIZED THAT OUR LOVING RELATIONSHIP GOES DEEPER THRU AGE. WE ARE PRACTICALLY UNITED SPIRITUALLY, setting aside the physical expression of love.

LORD THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR GIVING US RELIGIOUS SISTERS, PRIESTS, BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THIS JOURNEY OF LIFE. THANK YOU FOR MAKING US INSTRUMENTS IN SHARING YOUR LOVE FOR US.

**Serapio & Gavina Huelgas**



# Photo essai from the CSFN and AHF meeting in Rome - June 2022





**Dear Members of The Association of the Holy Family from all over the world!**

We hope that this newsletter has brought us a little closer to what is happening at the ends of the world in The Association of the Holy Family. How different the groups are, so are the provinces!

How much good is happening in our communities! What a richness of the Church that we create together and of which we are witnesses! And although we are different, we are all united by the Holy Family!

I believe that next year another newsletter "AHF in the World" will be published . This time edited by representatives from another province.

How good that you are! How good that Nazareth exists!

**Bożena i Janusz Malcowie**