

AHF in the world



**Nazareth
is the covenant
with the Love!**

Time and Timelessness

“God has made everything beautiful in its time, but has put the timeless into their hearts”. These words from the Book of Ecclesiastes (3:11) seem very appropriate for this moment. We have just concluded the beautiful Christmas season celebrating the Incarnation of God, who was born in a particular place at a particular time. Yet, this season also speaks to our hearts of the coming of the Lord that we still await, His longed-for and promised return in glory.

The call of this scripture text is to live in the present, recognizing, thanking and praising God for the gifts and beauty He is bestowing on us each day, while also being free enough to look ahead with open eyes, open hearts and open hands reaching out to the God who reaches for us and desires for us to be with Him for all eternity.

In this month of January, we sit perched on the horizon of what the new year holds. It feels like a time of hope and new possibilities. This year is especially significant for both the members and Associates of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth because of the Year of Preparation for the Congregation’s 150th Jubilee that began on the First Sunday of Advent. One of the forms of preparation is a novena of prayer, which touches on topics essential to our Nazareth identity:

- * Love of the Church and the Holy Father
- * Ordinariness and simplicity - seeing the sacred in the everyday
- * Profound union with God
- * Love for the Eucharist
- * Hiddenness
- * Faithfulness to the Holy Spirit
- * Paschal feature
- * Mutual love and family spirit
- * Obedience to God's will “Fiat voluntas Tua”

Preparing for the Jubilee is yet another reminder and opportunity to appreciate the tremendous blessings that the Lord has abundantly poured out on us in days past as well as His guiding Presence today. But it is more than that, it is a time to refocus on the timeless charism that Blessed Mary of Jesus the Good Shepherd has passed on to us and to follow where and how our Lord is leading us into the future. So as we continue to journey in 2024, I invite all of you to join us on this journey, especially this journey of prayer. May your lives be enriched with the beauty of today and your souls buoyed by the Spirit of the Eternal and Ever-faithful Lord.

Sr. Angela Marie Mazzeo
Superior General



May your heart be Nazareth...



Some time ago, I was deeply affected by these words of Blessed Mother Frances Siedliska, and they keep coming back to me. For more than a dozen years I had the grace of living and ministering in Nazareth, in the Holy Land, and there I discovered Nazareth in the beauty of everyday life, in the beauty of the environment, the people, our Arab Christians, customs, culture, but above all, in the beauty of the mystery of the Incarnation, because it is where it all began... The only historical place where we can say HERE the Word became Flesh. HERE God dwelt among us. Nazareth - a place chosen by God. I simply loved and love this place. Today, living in Rome, the words of Blessed Mother Frances often come back to me: may your heart be Nazareth... I want to share this word with you, because as Nazareth Sisters, members, or friends of AHF, we are invited to make our hearts become Nazareth, no matter where we live, what we do, who we are. We are invited to make Nazareth in us. What does that mean? I think everyone has to find their own answer. Maybe sometimes we need to stop and talk to Jesus, Mary and Joseph to hear and respond to ourselves what it means for me today. As I hear the word Nazareth, what do I see, what do I think about, what do I associate it with, what do I find, what do I long for... The late Mother Mary Teresa Jasionowicz, Superior General of the Congregation from 1992 to 2001, during her life, while praying she discovered and wrote the terms Nazareth: Nazareth is... In the pages of this newsletter you will find her profound expressions on Nazareth. I invite you to read, stop, meditate, choose your term, or perhaps write a new one that speaks to you, to me, and that makes our hearts become Nazareth, today, here and now.

Speaking of Nazareth and its mystery, I also invite you to pray for peace. For peace in the Ho-

ly Land, in Ukraine, and everywhere there are wars, where children are being killed, defenseless people... We are invited to pray for families, but also to pray for the entire human family, which is suffering today, in different corners of the world. Let us be messengers of peace and try to see how deeply God suffers seeing His children created in His image, who hate each other. Children created in His image, but probably no longer in His likeness... Let us tirelessly pray to Jesus through the intercession of the Queen of Peace for peace, for the salvation of the entire world, the entire human family.

In 2023, I had the grace of meeting some AHF communities of the Cracow Province (Poland), the Australian Province and the Philippine Province. These were beautiful meetings of people who are in different corners of the world praying for families, the Congregation and spreading the Kingdom of God's Love. AHF is very diverse in terms of age and number of members, as well as formation and mission. Everywhere, there is a vivid presence of the Holy Family, Mother Foundress and daily prayer for families. In Poland, Australia and the Philippines, I met with groups from different parts of the countries, and in Marayong, Australia, 6 new AHF members were admitted during this time. It was a great joy to meet Karolina and Kamil in Poland, with Lyn and Alycia in Australia and Grace and Carlos in the Philippines, who attended the international meeting of AHF directors and representatives in June 2022 in Rome.

I would like to thank Bożena and Janusz Malec from AHF in the Warsaw Province, who offered to help in the creation of the second International Bulletin. Thank them for their dedicated time and editing of this issue. Offering their help, they wrote: For us, this is an important element in building unity in AHF worldwide!!! And that is why we want to get involved! Thank you for this beautiful testimony of your AHF membership and efforts to build unity!

Sr. Speranza Grzebielec
general coordinator of the AHF

The Jubilee

The 150th anniversary of the Congregation coincides with the Jubilee of the Church, which will be celebrated in 2025.

Blessed Mother Foundress wanted the sisters to always be united with the Church. Celebrating the Congregation's Jubilee in the Year of the Jubilee of the Church, is a special expression of this unity and love. All AHF members are invited to join in the year of preparation and celebration of these events in their parishes, dioceses and in AHF communities.

Below are excerpts from Pope Francis' Letter and Mother General Angela Marie Mazzeo's Circular on the Jubilee, some important dates, the Jubilee logo, and the website address for these events:

About the Jubilee of the Church: <https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/pl.html>

About the Jubilee of the Congregation: <https://pl.nazarethfamily.org/>



fragments from the Letter of the Holy Father Francis for the Jubilee of the Church, February 11, 2022

“The Jubilee has always been an event of great spiritual, ecclesial, and social significance in the life of the Church. Ever since 1300, when Boniface VIII instituted the first Holy Year – initially celebrated every hundred years, then, following its biblical precedent, every fifty years, and finally every twenty-five years – God’s holy and faithful people has experienced this celebration as a special gift of grace, characterized by the forgiveness of sins and in particular by the indulgence, which is a full expression of the mercy of God (...).

In this time of preparation, I would greatly desire that we devote 2024, the year preceding the Jubilee event, to a great “symphony” of prayer. Prayer, above all else, to renew our desire to be in the presence of the Lord, to listen to him and to adore him. Prayer, moreover, to thank God for the many gifts of his love for us and to praise his work in creation, which summons everyone to

respect it and to take concrete and responsible steps to protect it. Prayer as the expression of a single “heart and soul” (cf. Acts 4:32), which then translates into solidarity and the sharing of our daily bread. Prayer that makes it possible for every man and woman in this world to turn to the one God and to reveal to him what lies hidden in the depths of their heart. Prayer as the royal road to holiness, which enables us to be contemplative even in the midst of activity. In a word, may it be an intense year of prayer in which hearts are opened to receive the outpouring of God’s grace and to make the “Our Father,” the prayer Jesus taught us, the life program of each of his disciples.

I ask the Blessed Virgin Mary to accompany the Church on the journey of preparation for the grace-filled event of the Jubilee, (...), I cordially send my Blessing.”

Fragments from the Circular nb 48 of Superior General Sr. Angela Marie Mazzeo for the Jubilee of the Congregation, November 20, 2023

This year, we fittingly link the start of Advent with the start of our Year of Preparation for the Congregation’s 150th Jubilee. This too is meant to be an active preparation of our hearts for the time of celebration. (...) For the moment, I wish to focus on one specific element, which I believe is crucial as we prepare for (...) the Jubilee, and

that is the call to forgiveness and healing.

Every morning, during the Benedictus, we hear words that speak to us of God’s desire to bestow forgiveness:

“You my child shall be called the prophet of the Most High for you will go before the Lord to prepare His way,

to give His people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.”

We know of course that these words, spoken by Zechariah, refer to St. John the Baptist. However, can we not apply them in some way to ourselves as well? (...) We too are called to “prepare the way of the Lord” in our own hearts and to help make ready our world for His coming. One way is by “giving His people knowledge of salvation...by the forgiveness of their sins” – to forgive the wrongs that may have been done to us, intentionally or unintentionally. In this very concrete way, we cooperate in God’s saving works. In imitating God’s mercy, we make God’s act of salvation more tangible to those around us, the salvation Jesus came to show us and make possible. In this way, we en flesh God’s words from the book of Isaiah, “Comfort, give comfort to my people ... and proclaim to her that her guilt is expiated.” (Is 40:1,2) We also prepare the way of the Lord and make straight His paths (cf. Is 40:3) by clearing out the clutter of anger, resentments

and grudges that take up space in our hearts, space that God longs to come and occupy instead.

If we turn our attention to the idea of Jubilee, we again see a call to forgiveness. We read in scripture that the Jubilee year signified a time for the release of slaves, the forgiveness of debts, and the return of property to its original owners. (cf. Lev 25) It is a “wiping clean of the slate” and a restoration of relationships. So as we embark on the Year of Preparation, it seems only right that we too focus on granting freedom and forgiveness to ourselves and one another. Whereas, resentment and hostility diminish the freedom to which God invites us, we wish to be reconciled within and among ourselves so that we can share and experience forgiveness, and ultimately God’s peace.

(...) I ask our Lord, the Prince of Peace who comes to reconcile us to the Father, to work within our hearts and bring reconciliation and healing so that His peace may truly be with us.

Jubilee of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth

Some dates:

YEAR OF PREPARATION: December 3, 2023 – November 30, 2024

YEAR OF CELEBRATION: December 1, 2024 – November 29, 2025

DAY OF JUBILEE: November 30, 2025

Description and explanation of the logo

The logo depicts the Holy Family in a vector version portrayed in an irregular heart shape. The outline of the heart symbolizes Saint Joseph and Mary who are surrounding Jesus with their love. Jesus is shown as hidden within them and, at the same time, as the center of the Holy Family.



Questions for personal, family, AHF community reflection

1. How can I open my heart to forgiveness and healing to celebrate with joy in the year 2025 of the Jubilee of the Church and the Congregation?
2. What do Jesus, Mary and Joseph invite me, my family, the AHF community to do in this year of preparation for the Jubilees? How can I/we prepare for these great events?

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.

Mother Maria Teresa Jasionowicz (1930-2023)

as a child was deported with her family to Kazakhstan by the NKVD. Her family, together with the army of General Anders, ended up first in Lebanon and then in England. It was there that Mother Maria Teresa joined the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth in 1950.

She became Superior General from 1992 to 2001. Pre-occupied with the problems of an increasingly threatened family, in 1991 she initiated the Association of the Holy Family in Paris. Mother Maria Teresa met several times with Pope John Paul II. She contributed to the beatification of the Nazareth Sisters - the Martyrs of Novogrodek. Since 2001, she had been ministering in Paris. She had always taken a keen interest in the families of the Association of the Holy Family. She is the author of memoirs entitled. "I Remember... and Remember Not."



Holy Family Province, USA

Founded in: 1985

Director: Sr. Maria Magdalena Rybak

Sisters responsible for groups: 14

Members of the AHF responsible for local groups: 4

Groups: 22

Members: 201

Women: 186

Men: 15

Married couples: 15

The children of Nazareth: -



New Members of the Association of the Holy Family, Southwest Area- Grand Prairie

On October 15, 2023 four women were accepted as the members of the Association of the Holy Family, in the convent chapel in Grand Prairie, Texas. Sister Maria Magdalena Rybak, National Director of the Association of the Holy Family, was present to welcome them.

Patricia Conner is the mother of six, a grand-

mother and great-grandmother and a member of the Fort Worth Serrans. A ceramist, she has her own business.

Teresa Nguyen is the mother of three, one of whom died at 21 years of age two years ago. Teresa is a lector in her parish, an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist in our chapel and the chief support of her husband who is studying for the Permanent Diaconate. Teresa works as an engineer.

Mary Milwee claims the Sisters of the Holy

Family of Nazareth as her family. She is an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist in a parish in Dallas as well as in our chapel. An art restorer, Mary is working at present on two busts given to her for repair by the sisters.



Dr. Moneta de Castro (pictured here receiving Holy Family pin from Sister Maria Magdalena CSF, National Director of the AHF) is the mother of three and a grandmother. Monette is a lector in our chapel and is often a participant in pilgrimages. A retired pediatrician, she assists our sisters in the feeding of the children in Antipolo, Philippines, among other charitable works, through the foundation she founded in honor of her deceased husband.

Testimony of the members of the Association of the Holy Family Grand Prairie

Our names are Carlos and Ileana Espinosa. In 1992, we moved to Grand Prairie, Texas, started looking for a church and found Immaculate Conception. After a few weeks of attending, we were told there was a convent near our house and that mass was at 9:00 am. We decided to attend one Sunday. I was pregnant and had two small sons. The sisters welcomed

Nazareth - is intimacy with the Holy Spirit.

Mather Maria Teresa Jasionowicz

us with great joy, and we continued to attend every Sunday. We sat in the back with our infant daughter. Sister Julia also sat in the back watching the door. Before moving to Australia, she made a pillow for our daughter that we still have. One day Sister Beata invited us to attend the meeting of the AHF, and we became the members of the Association of the Holy Family. We have been blessed to know Sisters Ancilla, María Elena, Honesta and many others who are no longer with us. We helped with fundraisers cooking, organizing garage sales, Christmas sales and sharing breakfast during the monthly meetings. Sister Beata always motivated us, and we cooperated to make the group united and purposeful. Being a member helped me get my children to attend mass and then catechism.



Members of the AHF gathered in the convent chapel in Grand Prairie.

My daughter had her first communion at the convent and then her 15th birthday mass. The sisters and the convent are a blessing. We are now servers. My husband and son are lectors,

and I'm an extraordinary minister of the Eucharist. Please pray for the sisters and for the peace and unity of the Holy Family in Christ.

Meeting of the Association of the Holy Family, Midwest Area- Des Plaines

Words could never express our gratitude to all the members of the Association of the Holy Family for the attendance and participation at the gathering on Saturday, October 28th, 2023. It was a wonderful way to spend the afternoon – enjoying conversation and a bit of refreshment and praying in the spirit of Blessed Mary of Jesus the Good Shepherd. We were also introduced to Bishop Robert Barron's book,

“This is My Body” (A Call to Eucharistic Revival). In his introductory remarks, Bishop Barron relates a bit of the reason for writing this book. He states that in a survey entitled “Pew Forum,” only 1/3 of those who responded to the survey believe in the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. The majority, then, regard the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine to be mere symbols of Jesus' presence in the Eucharist. How sad is that to realize that many Catholics do not believe in the real presence of Jesus. Therefore, the need for Bishop Barron to write this book and the reason we shared it with those present today for meditation and discussion.

During our gathering congratulations were also extended to Jean Wesolowski who was named “Woman of the Year” from Holy Virgin Martyrs Parish in Schiller Park, IL. This honor was given to Jean in gratitude for her years of SERVICE IN THE CHURCH – first at St. Maria Goretti and now St. Beatrice. Thank you for the many loving ways to take care of the environment in your parish!

We also extended congratulations to Mary Dubiel who received recognition for 50 years of CATECHETICAL MINISTRY in various parishes – St. Ladislaus, St. Ferdinand and now St. Constance. We are very grateful for your many years of service in various parishes.

Nazareth - is the eternal kiss of God for our daily life on earth.

Mather Maria Teresa Jasionowicz

We are very proud of you and the many ways you bring the spirit of the Holy Family to those around you. May God continue to bless you!

At the close of our Business Meeting, we were invited to the chapel where we prayed the Holy Rosary for Peace in the World, participated in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and, finally, celebrated Mass with Fr. Paul Sims, CR - thanking God for the many blessings of the day!



From the left Sister Patricia Ann Koschalke, Sister Mary Kevin Hanek and coordinator of the AHF in the Midwest Area Sister Michael Marie Franzak pictured with the members of the AHF in Des Plaines during October meeting.



From the left Sister Clare Marie Kozicki, Sister Lucille Madura and Sister Virginia Zielinski during gathering in October, with the members of the AHF in Des Plaines.

Nazareth - is the living of the 8 beatitudes later announced by Jesus.

Mather Maria Teresa Jasionowicz

Association of the Holy Family, Great Lakes Area- Pittsburgh

The members of the Association of the Holy Family in Cleveland Ohio, Erie Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh Pennsylvania all would love nothing better then to travel to Rome to visit the convents and places of our beloved Mother Francisca Siedliska and of course seeing and receiving the blessing from the Pope Francis. Since that is not possible, Sister Madeleine Rybicki the coordinator of these three groups arranged for the Pope Francis to “come and visit” the members of the AHF (as you can see in the pictures below). All enjoyed the Pope’s “presence” and his blessing at the Christmas gatherings in each of the areas. The pictures indicate the true happiness and joy that was so palpable among the members of the AHF during those gatherings.



Sister Madeleine Rybicki CSFN, with the live-size picture of Pope Francis who “visited” the members of the AHF during their Christmas gathering.



Members of the AHF in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. “If we cannot go to Rome to see the Pope- The Pope came to Pittsburgh-to us.



Members of the AHF from Cleveland at Christmas Party with the Pope and Santa at the Breckvillee of Oaks Retirement Home.

Nazareth - is the never-fading star which beckons to The Meeting.

Mather Maria Teresa Jasionowicz

On April 6th, 2024 one day afternoon retreat is planned for the members of the AHF in Erie, Pennsylvania. Reverend Larry Smith will be the speaker of the two scheduled sessions. The members of the AHF will have the opportunity to participate in the sacrament of reconciliation, partake in the saying of the Holy Rosary, time for personal reflection, sharing a meal. Members of the AHF will have the opportunity to end the day with participation in the Most Holy Eucharist.

Holy Spirit Province, Australia

Founded in: 1986
Director: Sr. Rita Marie Apura
Sisters responsible for groups: 2
Groups: 2
Members: 39
Women: 28
Men: 11
Married couples: 7
The Children of Nazareth: 4



One in the Family of God

The Bible describes 'Heaven as a place filled with God's presence'

So coming together as one family, on 18th November 2023, was such a joyous and blessed occasion for sisters, associates and friends. We welcome our new six Associate members of the Holy Family of Nazareth my husband Suman and I, Henryka Ogrodniczek, Mary Anne Xuereb, Linda Dessa and Mary Jacintha Allegacoön.



So when I had my own family to witness us being commissioned and to be welcomed as the new Associate members, we felt a deep sense of peace and joy. This is a manifestation of the presence of God in ours and in my children's lives. It was a privilege and honour for them to witness such occasion, which I am sure they will always treasure.

Just like many others, who are on a journey through life the challenges and trials we have endured in life are surely made a little easy, because we always put Jesus at the centre of our lives. We also had and continue to have amazing, kind & compassionate people to support and pray for us. For this I am truly grateful!

I believe relationships are a huge part of life—whether someone is a part of your family, your friend circle, a colleague, or someone you pass by once in your life, not coincidental but

It was such a pleasure to meet the Superior General of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, Sr. Angela Marie Mazzeo, and Sr. Speranza Grzebielec, the General Coordinator of the Association of the Holy Family, who travelled from Rome for the General Visitation and to experience the beauty of our Holy Spirit Province and the 'Land Down Under'.



presented to us as a gift. We all have opportunities every day to help others. We can do this by, blessing one another with kindness or prayer, or by showing them God's love through our words and actions. Whatever you choose to do, do so, with a heart full of gratitude. That's what we try to do and live our lives every day. The very reason that my heart is full, as I recount the 18th of November, as my family desired in anticipation to experience and witness our acceptance ceremony. My family experience the love of God which flows through meeting the sisters and other members of the Associations and to spent time in prayer and the gift of Eucharist.

As our story and journey continues the experience of our childhood, remembering our parents who guided and raised us in a loving and faith filled environment, are indeed a gift from God.

So thank you Sr. Rita and all the sisters of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth for welcoming, guiding and supporting us. I pray that together we may truly extend the Kingdom of God's love in our own family and reaching out to those to whom God entrusted to us. Gratitude for keeping us in your prayers and know that you keep us in Ours!

Colette Coelho

Nazareth - is the amazement and delight of heaven and earth.

Mather Maria Teresa Jasionowicz



Witnessing the Joy

In the hallowed halls where light does dance,
The Holy Family welcomes with open arms,
Six new Associates join, a joyous trance,
As love and warmth unfurl like sacred charms.

A tapestry woven with threads of grace,
Each new member a vibrant hue,
In this sacred space, a harmonious embrace,
A family grows, both old and new.

Beneath the arches of camaraderie,
Laughter echoes, a sweet melody,
As bonds are forged, a divine decree,
A tapestry of prayer and togetherness,
a symphony.

In the heart of service, a shared devotion,
Guided by faith, a sacred emotion,
Welcoming souls with a gentle notion,
To build a legacy, an eternal promotion.

Eyes sparkling with hope, hearts intertwined,
As the Holy Family expands its kind,
A celebration of love, a unity bind,
In the sanctuary of joy, all worries behind.

Through the corridors of compassion we roam,
With every step, a sense of home,
New associates find solace to comb,
In the embrace of love, they have a room.

I witness the joy, a celestial sight,
As the Holy Family glows in the light,
A tapestry woven, pure and bright,
Welcoming six new members, my heart ignites.

Sr. Rita Marie Apura

Nazareth - is the amazement and delight of
heaven and earth.

Mather Maria Teresa Jasionowicz



Jesus the Good Shepherd Province, France, Europe

Founded in: 1991
 Director: Sr. Luiza Chrzęstowska
 Sisters responsible for groups: 1
 Groups: 1
 Members: 38
 Women: 22
 Men: 16
 Married couples: 16
 The Children of Nazareth: 15



We are like a family

We learned about the Association of the Holy Family of Nazareth thanks to the Polish School in Paris and the summer camps in "Emaus", organized by the Sisters of Holy Family of Nazareth. Shortly thereafter, we began attending every month meetings, and in June 2023 we took an oath and became its full members.

In the Association, we are all like a family - a community of people ready to serve God and



the Church with their whole lives. We regularly participate in formation meetings, where we pray together, share the Word of God, and talk about faith, marital and family life. We help each other and support each other with prayer. We try to imitate the Holy Family in everyday life and do something good for others. We enjoy spending time together, making friends between families, and thanks to our diversity

we can complement each other and serve each other with what each of us has received from God.

It is very important for us that by belonging to the Association, we deepen our faith and knowledge of the Word of God, we seek God in our lives, and our children grow up in an environment in which the same values are shared, which are not very popular in today's world, as life of faith, responsibility or patriotism.

Joanna i Rafał Paszkowscy

The power of prayer

June 25, 2023 was a beautiful day for our family. We made an oath in which we applied to join the Association of the Holy Family of Nazareth. We were invited to the families meeting for a first time 10 years ago, at the same time we started our life together as new family. We participated in meetings and conferences, always greeted and welcomed as warmly as at home. Belonging to Association of the Holy Family of Nazareth helps us to lead our life of the Holy Family. When we experienced ill-

Nazareth - is the wedding at Cana, because it changes earth into heaven.

Mather Maria Teresa Jasionowicz

ness, we were asked « why us ? » . We were looking for comfort and support, the Sisters of Nazareth assured us about they prayers. The information reached the Association, common prayer was stronger than medicine, the disease stopped being delivered. Finally at one of the meetings we made an oath and joined Association. No one forced us or pushed us to join. We are grateful for the graces received through the Holy Family of Nazareth. We are



now confirmed members of the Association and we want to strengthen others with our prayers. Holy Family – pray for us.

Agnieszka i Tomasz Sobierajscy

Nazareth is our home

2014 changed our lives. After the pilgrimage to Medjugorje, we knew that our lives had to change 180°. We knew that without the community we would not be able to grow and remain in faith. The search lasted several months, and the choice ultimately turned out to be obvious. Our eldest daughter, Kamila, went on trips with the Association of the Holy Family, and her desire to return to Emaus was proof that something good was happening there. Our friend also « accidentally » invited us the community at the same time, and we already knew that there was only one choice and it would certainly prove fruitful, the Holy Spirit clearly showed us the community. In September 2016, our family was reborn and we started meeting regularly as AHF friends. God, in his love, gave us true friends, for us and for our four children. The kindness, enthusiasm and, above all, the prayers of our Sisters of Nazareth, the priests who serve us and the entire community for our children are saving us, we feel safe, the huge burden of responsibility se-

ems to have disappeared. In June 2023, we officially joined the AHF. Staying in a family



community has created conditions for our spiritual growth, the children have established valuable community friendships that help them overcome the problems of growing up, we motivate each other in prayer, support on the path of faith, encourage, sometimes admonish, this is extremely valuable because we know that it guides including love and goodness towards other people. We have established amazing, authentic relationships, we know that we can count on each other between families and that we will receive physical and spiritual help in the most difficult moments, and that when prayer is needed, we receive it immediately and with great power.

Aneta i Paweł Chudzik



Nazareth - is the beloved place which spreads love all over the world.

Mather Maria Teresa Jasionowicz

Most Holy Name of Jesus Province, Warsaw, Poland

Founded in: 1996
 Director: Sr. Michaela Pietrzak
 Sisters responsible for groups: 18
 Groups: 18
 Members: 253
 Women: 144
 Men: 109
 Married couples: 106
 The children of Nazareth: 176



“Disciple’s journey” was a theme that accompanied us during the series of winter retreats for families, and it illustrates well the dynamics in which the AHF of Warsaw Province finds itself. We are constantly on the way, in the school of the Holy Family that leads us to holiness.

visiting families with the icon of the Holy Family and the relics of the Blessed Sisters we experience many graces and moving encounters, which are but the fruits of praying together.

The experience we gained at the AHF International Meeting in Rome in June 2022 and the conclusions from the meeting helped us to reflect in our local communities on what ‘a community’ is and how to create it. We are using the conclusions of the local AHF meetings for further activities so that our communities become an increasingly beautiful image of the Church,



The retreats that we managed to hold in 2023 (there were 10 series of them in the winter and summer) and various weekend events, show how important the formation of couples, families and individuals is. While

a community of love.

Abiding on the Lord’s disciple journey mobilizes us, both AHF members and sisters, not to focus only on our own issues, but to make a constant effort to reach out to others. We strive to do this in our communities, by sharing our time and love, by the testimony of life, by helping others, by conducting courses for spouses or by sharing our testimonies in parishes.

Our testimonies are a vivid picture of what is happening in AHF in Warsaw Province.



A beautiful time together

This year for the first time we went on a retreat with children. We really enjoyed the atmosphere at the retreat, although the first days were very difficult for us. On Thursday, just before the retreat, a sad experience befell us. Our unborn child died, and it was necessary for the doctor to



intervene to save the health and life of the mother. It was a very difficult experience for both of us and it made us quarrel in the first days of the retreat. It seemed to us that there was something wrong only with us, while everyone around us appeared to be beautiful and lived in peace. In our



sharing group we realized that our thinking was wrong, saying that others also quarrel and argue sometimes, including during this retreat.

It was beautiful to watch the families present



there, to see how they talk to their children, how wonderfully they cope with a large number of children. Through conversations with other couples, we understood that other children, especially boys, were or are, just as active as our kids. We badly needed time with the Lord Jesus, alone in silence. This was possible thanks to the Nazareth sisters, who took care of the children, organizing various valuable activities and games for them. We also greatly appreciated the afternoon free time, as we were able to spend time with each other and the children.

The retreat was a beautiful time spent together. We very much appreciated the support we received from other people who told us about their experience of losing an unborn child. The Sisters create a wonderful atmosphere. They are true friends of families.

Aneta i Maciej

OUR PATH TO ADOPTION

The story of our marriage from the beginning is not ordinary, however, we will not tell it now....

We waited a very long time with the decision to adopt a child. We had all sorts of thoughts, including those not necessarily in line with Catholic teaching (you probably know what we mean). "Such Catholics we are..." - we thought. Fortunately, God had his own plan for us - probably a better one, because today we have five children.

So the story is like this:

We went to Bialystok to a well-known professor, who was, one might say, rather "impolite". I cried, and Andrew said: "That's enough, this is the moment." We talked about adoption more than once, but I needed time. I had a lot of fear, first of all, whether I would be able to love such a child. I really wanted to be pregnant and have a baby of my own. I shed so many tears but God, as always, knows better. Today we know that He KNOWS BETTER and we thank Him for our daughters.

On May 11, on our 9th wedding anniversary, KINGA was born. For us it was a brilliant plan, no one could have thought it out better than HE, our God. On the other hand, on Kinga's fifth birthday, Grandpa and Grandma (the foster family where Kinga was previously) came and brought with them baby Anastasia, who was

born on January 6. We loved her very much.

On February 24, 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine. Following our hearts, we declared in CARITAS our willingness to take refugees under our roof. A few days later the following reflection came to our mind "In Poland no one needs help?". We went to the District Family Assistance Center, where we heard that we had to undergo the appropriate training. That's how we became a foster family.

The first boys (brothers Erik and Kordek) were brought to us by the Center's staff even before the training was completed. They were with us for a short time, only three months. After that time, by court order, they returned to their parents. After the vacation on September 1, we received a phone call: "Tiny 5-month-old Louisa needs help".

Again the question was whether I could handle it - such a toddler; Andrew is still working. After a sleepless night and reading a certain sentence of Fr. Pio: "In doing the will of others, we should realize that we are doing the will of God, which is shown to us in the will of our superiors or our neighbor", at that moment I realized that I was doing God's will. I trusted God and Lusia is with us, and we all love her very much. On November 27 there was, again, a phone call to my husband saying: "Help is needed for 3-year-old Barbara and 5-year-old Anthony." The Lord once again opened our hearts. We accepted these two as well. Sometimes it's hard, but since we have recognized (several times in this story) that HE, our GOD knows better, why we should resist. It is clear for us that these children are after 'traumas' so it will not be easy. But to paraphrase St. James, "Love without works is dead" (cf. James 2:26).

Ela i Andrzej



'Closer to each other'- a course for spouses

A great joy for us is the launch of a new course for spouses of all ages that started in the autumn of 2022; it is our "original AHF initiative". We dreamed of such a formula from the beginning, that is, from 2017, when we first held such meetings. We wanted to create a course based on Holy Family spirituality, which would combine human and spiritual content, and at the same time show a model for each couple found in the relationship of the Holy Family of Nazareth.



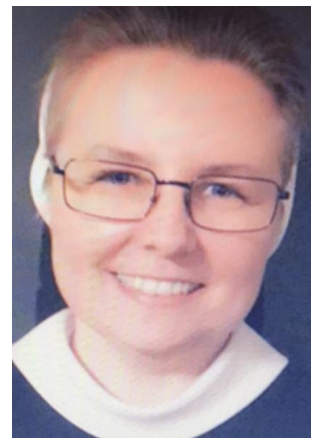
What we have created together with another married couple and sisters is a 4-week course on communication in marriage. The topics touch not only on the basic principles of communication between spouses. We address relationship difficulties arising from gender differences or our temperaments. We talk about our emotions, which are often results of satisfied or unmet needs. Finally, we show how to deal concretely with various daily conflicts. The first three conferences are interspersed with a number of exercises, which participants find very useful, emphasizing their concreteness and relevance to everyday life. The final conference is led by the Sisters – it is combined with meditation on the biblical text about finding Jesus and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, during which the act of entrusting spouses to the Holy Family take place.

In 2023 two courses were held in two parishes in Lublin, as well as two weekend versions, attended by about 50 couples.

Bożenka i Janusz Malcowie

Most Holy Name of Mary Province, Krakow, Poland

Founded in: 2000
 Director: Sr. Elżbieta Kuczmarska
 Sisters responsible for groups: 9
 Groups: 13
 Members: 109
 Women: 66
 Men: 43
 Married couples: 42
 The children of Nazareth: 99



AHF formation events in the Krakow Province

Last year was the time of the visitation of Mother General and the election of new Provincial Administration for our Province. On this occasion, Mother Angela Maria Mazzeo and Sister Speranza Grzebielec visited some AHF communities. These meetings were



accompanied by common prayer, sharing of faith and an atmosphere of joy.

"Live by the power of the Holy Spirit" is the main theme of the formation year of families in AHF communities. The theme of the year invites us to open our hearts and be attentive to the action of the Holy Spirit. John Paul II in the Encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* reminds us, that the path of the Church runs through the human heart, because there is the hidden place, where the saving encounter with the Holy Spirit takes place. There we also experience Him as the Spirit of Truth, and at

the same time as the Paraclete who brings consolation, who is the Counselor Intercessor and Advocate, who never ceases to be the guardian of hope in the human heart (cf. DV, 67).

This year, three series of retreats were organized for families, where we reflected on opening our hearts to the action of the Holy Spirit. The first series was a winter retreat in Zakopane. It was led by Sister Jolanta Olczyk. It was a lectio divina retreat. Families had time to meditate, pray with the word of God, but also to meet new families and take a break from everyday dealings. The second series was a summer retreats for families in Warzenko: "From the desert to the garden - development of life in the Holy Spirit." The third series of family retreats took place in October in Licheń and concentrated on the topic: "The Holy Spirit working in the liturgy and sacraments of the



Church." The retreat was led by Sr. Katarzyna Gizicka and Sr. Karolina Ostopinko (Jadwiga Sisters of Wawel), who are responsible for the adult catechumenate. It was a very fruitful time that allowed us to explore the richness of



God's gifts given in the sacraments, and to realize the power of God's grace in us.

Some families do not have the opportunity to participate in retreat together, so we organize weekend retreats in Advent and Lent, where women and men can spend time in prayer separately, if their life situation does not allow them to go together. This year, two series of retreats were held for women and two for men. The Advent retreat took place in Gdańsk and the subject of the Eight Beatitudes was discussed, and the Lenten retreat was in



our convent in Olsztyn, and concerned Christian values in marriage.

The newly admitted members are our joy as well. This year ten people joined the ranks: two married couples and six individuals.

We also try to organize meetings of Sisters serving AHF communities. As every year, this year there was one meeting for the Sisters. It took place in Zakopane. We met to pray together and share the joys and difficulties in serving families.



Nazareth - is the silent presence of God in the world.
Mather Maria Teresa Jasionowicz

Mary of Nazareth Province, Phillippines

Founded in: 2007
Director: Sr. Mary Michael Banquil
Sisters responsible for groups: 8
Groups: 8
Members: 98
Women: 76
Men: 22
Married couples: 14
* Statistics 2022



Joys and Challenges as beginners of the Association of the Holy Family

It was finally after almost past ten years of existence of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth in Cardona, Rizal Luzon part of the Philippines that the Association of the Holy Family has begun.

It was on July 16, 2023 that twelve (12) can-



didates for the Association of the Holy Family were accepted. Sr. Greta Marie Gallo the Provincial Superior of Mary of Nazareth Province accepted the candidates together with her was Sr. Mary Michael Banquil the Assistant Provin-

cial Superior and the Associates Director.

It was a joy that after ten (10) consecutive months of the orientation which was held every third Sunday of the month finally has ended successfully with the Rite of Acceptance.



It was a joy to have the new members of the associates to keep them active by continuing to be faithful in their common prayers like Prayer to the Holy Family, Novena, Rosary and other devotional prayers. They came to the chapel at around 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon to start their prayers with the 3:00 o'clock Prayer to the Divine Mercy. Their prayers are until 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon daily from Monday to Friday.





Another way to keep them active is to have the Image of the Holy Family be transferred from one family of our associates to another every week. The Holy Family will stay for one week in the house of the associate in order for them to pray as one family honoring the Holy Family of Nazareth.

Most of all the challenge for the associate is to persevere and be faithful as members of the Association of the Holy Family.

All of these challenges are in the Hands of God. We believe in God's will and in Him everything will be possible. We pray for the grace of God for all of these.

Bohol

“Let us pray together that the Kingdom of God's love, which blossomed in the Holy Family, may take root in our souls.” (Blessed Mary of Jesus the Good Shepherd)

This promise is fulfilled! On April 9, 2023, Easter Sunday, as we celebrate the joy and peace of the Resurrection of our Lord, Jesus, the first new members in Bohol were received into the Association of the Holy Family. We thank Him for this gift!



The challenges that the Associates are facing:
1) How other members of the family of the Associate will be encourage to attend the Sunday Mass?

2) How they can help other families spiritually? A plan to look for couples who are not yet married to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony. Other sacraments needed by the other members of the family like baptism and confirmation.

3) How the youth can be involved in the activities of the Church?



Blessed Martyrs Province, Belarus

Founded in: 2009
 Director: Sr. Marianna Aleszczyk
 Sisters responsible for groups: 4
 Groups: 7
 Members: 33
 Women: 20
 Men: 13
 Married couples: 12
 The Children of Nazareth: 39

For AHF in Belarus, the year 2023 began with the acceptance of 4 new members. The Hardynets family, Iryna and Andrej (with 4 children), and the Klachkou family, Kanstancin and Sviatlana (with 5 children), joined the community.

The New Year's Eve gathering in Navahrudak brought together 70 people. It marked the 13th New Year meeting. Monthly meetings bring together families in Hrodna, Lida, Minsk, Smarhon, Hlybokaje and Maladechna.

Summer retreats traditionally gathered us in Navahrudak. It's fortunate that we have this warm place where our blessed Sisters Martyrs bring us together. About 80 people participated in the week-long summer retreats. Even the Navahrudak house is becoming too small for us.

In August, "retreats on the way" for married couples took place. Despite difficulties with visas and borders, 16 people embarked on a week-long pilgrimage to Medjugorje.

And so, we began our formational meetings in the new year in September. The III Nazareth Forum in Belarus took place in September, becoming a tradition for us to gather at this all-Belarusian AHF meeting.

Our Belarusian AHF community continues to grow in Warsaw, Poland. In August 2023, a family from this community, the Sidarenkas (Anton and Veranika), joined AHF. Our Belarusian community in the Polish capital mostly works among local Belarusian expats. Since 2020, around 300,000 Belarusians have emigrated to Poland.



We continue to observe the development of AHF in Belarus. Please pray for us, and we remember all AHF members worldwide.

Sister Marianna Aleszczyk



Nazareth - is a lesson of constant choices for the sake of God.

Mather Maria Teresa Jasionowicz





Nazareth - is a place where all that is earthly is penetrated by God.
Mather Maria Teresa Jasionowicz



