

MORNING PRAYER ON FOUNDATION DAY

(DEC. 8TH)



We the daughters of St. Arnold have completed.....years of our missionary presence in the world and.....years in India as we celebrate today the birthday of our Congregation.

Our story begins in the loving heart of the Triune God. Out of the loving communion of the father, the son, and the Spirit, creation was born. In the fullness of time, the Author of life entered the story. There was a woman Mary, who was born immaculate to give birth to God's own son, Jesus. Empowered by the Spirit, Jesus proclaimed the Reign of God and beckoned all into friendship with the Triune God, By His words, and deeds. Jesus invited back to communion all those who, in one way or the other, had fallen out of it or had been pushed to the margins, He reached out to all but specially to sinners, the poor, the sick, women, and people of other beliefs. The transforming power of Spirit Challenged Jesus, to expand his consciousness, when he wanted to limit his ministry to fellow Jews.

The same Spirit filled our founding generation with the burning desire to reach out to people far beyond their own horizon, and to share with them the greatest gift of all- the all inclusive love of God. Their audacity continues to inspire us.

As SSpS today, we continue the story of our founding generation began. The story of God's love from beginning of time must be told ever new, in new words, in new lives. Hence let us implore the Spirit of Jesus to lead us to that great vision, as we sing the solemn creator Spirit.

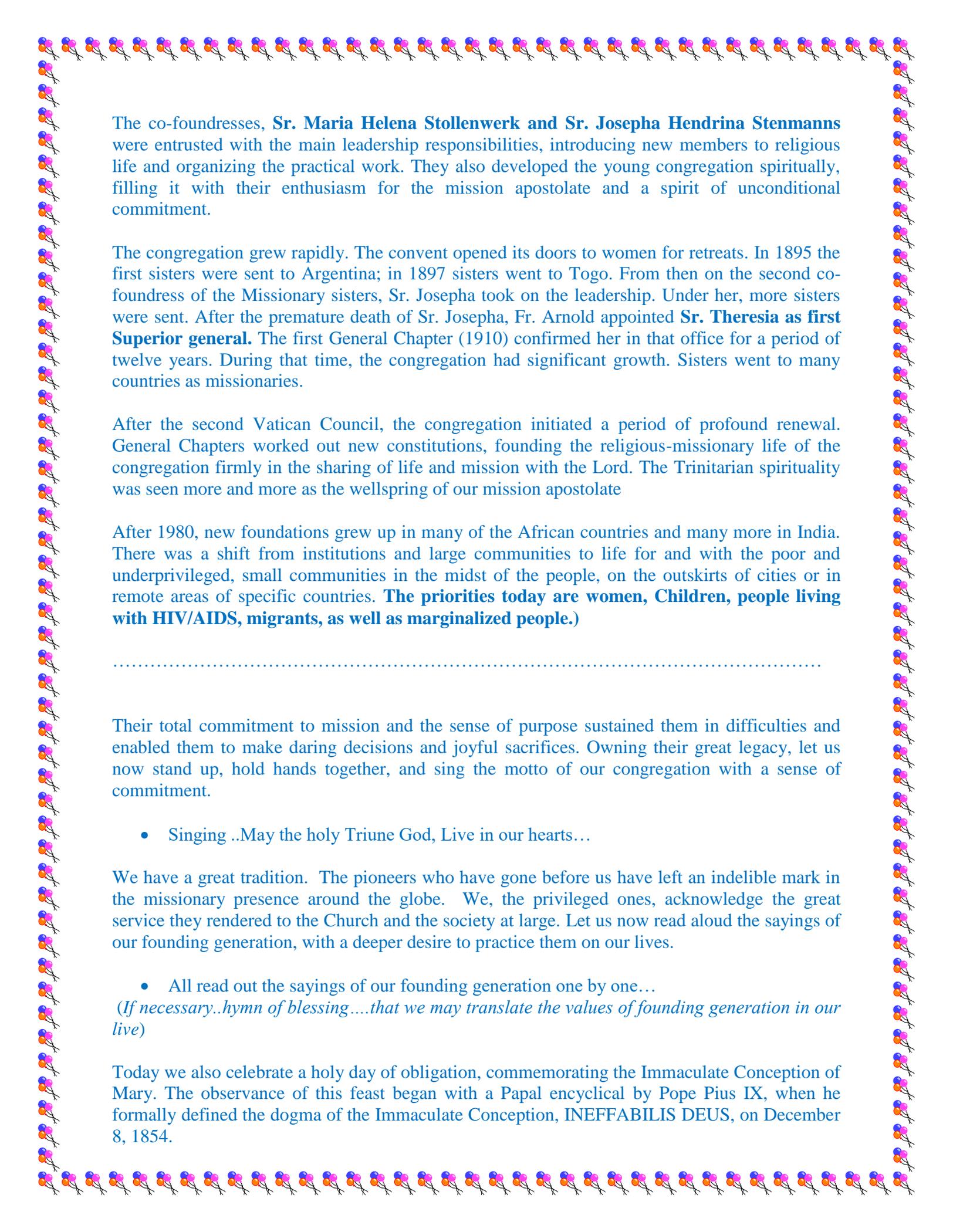
Solemn Creator Spirit.....

Every birthday is a moment of celebration and an opportunity; a Kairos time, to make an introspection into all that has been and to move forward with a greater clarity and enthusiasm. Let us now glance back to those sacred years, days and moments of the history, where the birthing of our congregation took place.

Acting.....(.with commentary....)

OR

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(On December 8th 1889 **Fr. Arnold Janssen** founded the women's Mission Congregation, **Servants of the Holy Spirit** in the little village of Steyl, Netherlands. He had already founded the first German mission house there in 1875 for men and named as, **Society of the Divine Word (SVD)**. The women who came to Steyl with the hope of becoming missionary sisters and devoted their lives for the spreading the faith, went through a long seven years of strenuous waiting. Finally, in 1893 the Bishop of Roermond approved their Constitutions. On March 12, 1894, the first twelve sisters took their vows.



The co-foundresses, **Sr. Maria Helena Stollenwerk and Sr. Josepha Hendrina Stenmanns** were entrusted with the main leadership responsibilities, introducing new members to religious life and organizing the practical work. They also developed the young congregation spiritually, filling it with their enthusiasm for the mission apostolate and a spirit of unconditional commitment.

The congregation grew rapidly. The convent opened its doors to women for retreats. In 1895 the first sisters were sent to Argentina; in 1897 sisters went to Togo. From then on the second co-foundress of the Missionary sisters, Sr. Josepha took on the leadership. Under her, more sisters were sent. After the premature death of Sr. Josepha, Fr. Arnold appointed **Sr. Theresia as first Superior general**. The first General Chapter (1910) confirmed her in that office for a period of twelve years. During that time, the congregation had significant growth. Sisters went to many countries as missionaries.

After the second Vatican Council, the congregation initiated a period of profound renewal. General Chapters worked out new constitutions, founding the religious-missionary life of the congregation firmly in the sharing of life and mission with the Lord. The Trinitarian spirituality was seen more and more as the wellspring of our mission apostolate

After 1980, new foundations grew up in many of the African countries and many more in India. There was a shift from institutions and large communities to life for and with the poor and underprivileged, small communities in the midst of the people, on the outskirts of cities or in remote areas of specific countries. **The priorities today are women, Children, people living with HIV/AIDS, migrants, as well as marginalized people.)**

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Their total commitment to mission and the sense of purpose sustained them in difficulties and enabled them to make daring decisions and joyful sacrifices. Owing their great legacy, let us now stand up, hold hands together, and sing the motto of our congregation with a sense of commitment.

- Singing ..May the holy Triune God, Live in our hearts...

We have a great tradition. The pioneers who have gone before us have left an indelible mark in the missionary presence around the globe. We, the privileged ones, acknowledge the great service they rendered to the Church and the society at large. Let us now read aloud the sayings of our founding generation, with a deeper desire to practice them on our lives.

- All read out the sayings of our founding generation one by one...
(If necessary..hymn of blessing....that we may translate the values of founding generation in our live)

Today we also celebrate a holy day of obligation, commemorating the Immaculate Conception of Mary. The observance of this feast began with a Papal encyclical by Pope Pius IX, when he formally defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, INEFFABILIS DEUS, on December 8, 1854.

The proclaimed Roman Catholic dogma states "that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin. Being always free from original sin, she was from the start filled with the sanctifying grace that would normally come with baptism after birth.

As we honor Mary our mother, the immaculate one, let us ask her for graces that we are most in need of..... (Pause)

We remember all those people who have asked our prayers and all those who are in need of our prayers.....(pause)

We remember to pray for all the leadership teams at congregational, provincial and community level.....(Pause)

We may also pray for the intention that we would like to make for our congregation especially:

- To move toward communion, widening the circle
- To be in communion with God
- To be in communion with the marginalized and excluded
- To be in communion with creation
- To have communion within our congregation
- To be in communion with others.....(pause)

Keeping all these intentions before mother Mary, We shall now honour her, by offering flowers.

- All are requested to come forward and honour Mary our Mother
- Hymn to Mother Mary

God our Father, You prepared the Virgin Mary, to be the worthy mother of your son. You let her share beforehand in the salvation Christ would bring by his death, and kept her sinless from the first moment of her conception. Help us by her prayers to live in your presence without sin. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen.

- **Concluding prayer:** We take the ‘consecration to Mary’ from Prayer Book
- Angelus.....

Sr. Bridget George & Sr. Jessie Mary Paul SSps

