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COMMUNICATION N.18

TO: All the Sisters of the Congregation
FROM: Sr. M. Franca Zonta, Mother General
RE: Malawi Foundation
DATE: Rome, April 8, 2016 - *Blessed Chaminade Anniversary*

Dear Sisters,

Christ Our Savior is Risen! Alleluia!

It is an Easter marked by blood, hatred, and violence on innocent and helpless victims, many of whom are children. In a climate that becomes tense and insecure, the invitation to hope and to peace must resonate even louder, as we were reminded by Pope Francis on Easter night.

"Peace be with you, says the Risen Lord ... Here I am sending you, and you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth."

In this context of Passion-Death and Resurrection, where hope is stronger than death, I write to update you about the latest news related to our recent trip to Malawi which, among others things, has already been given a glimpse via Moshi News .

In Malawi, Sr. Ana Lucia De Goes and I met with Sr. Lucie Sandé, Regional Superior of Africa. The missionary outreach in Africa, it should be remembered, has risen from a desire of the African sisters at their assembly on the occasion of 50 years of presence in Africa, a desire that the GA encourages, supports and accompanies.

"Church of Africa, rise up and walk", said John Paul II, echoing that which had previously been stated in an exhortation by Paul VI in 1969, in Kampala, Uganda: "Africans, you are now missionaries to yourselves."

From the Jubilees that you have celebrated this year, you derive a duty of maturity and responsibility. The example of the missionaries of the past from elsewhere, from countries of long-standing Christian tradition, teaches us extensively in this direction. This is the time of being heirs to the Mission. It is a time to be on your missionary journey ..." (Concluding Message - Assembly Kara, 2013)

The trip to Malawi in the diocese of Karonga held particular importance because of the meeting with the Bishop of the Diocese Msgr. Martin Mtumbuka, from whom we had received an invitation, to come to his diocese to place ourselves in the "Saint Mary's Project", the secondary school for youth funded by US benefactors.

The meeting with the bishop clarified several practical aspects, and above all to see:

- its commitment to the promotion of women in an area where the tradition of the "girl brides" is still widespread.
- his great sensitivity and careful attention to the problem of education, particularly of youth;
- his high esteem for female religious life, and for the Marianist Family which he already knows, thanks to the presence of the Marianist Brothers in his diocese;
- his confidence and immense gratitude towards us.

Malawi, called "The warm heart of Africa," has a population of about 18 million, predominantly Christian with a significant Muslim minority. The Diocese of Karonga, formed in 2010, with 400,000 inhabitants, has about 65,000 baptized. It is divided into six parishes with 17 priests, one male religious congregation (the Society of Mary), and one female diocesan congregation (The Sisters of the Rosary).

It is a very poor diocese, awaiting our inclusion with great joy and great hope.

The secondary school of Saint Mary's, scheduled for 600 girls, will open its doors this year in late August for the first cycle of classes. The solemn official opening will be in early November, in the presence of civil and religious authorities, and the presence of the project funders.

The opening of the school and the official inauguration are important events in which the presence of religious is an essential component of the project to the project directors, events that cannot be missed. This is what we understood, and have pondered in the General Council and in the Regional Council of Africa.

Dialogue with the African Region is constant. The new Foundation, as already mentioned, will be dependent on the Region of Africa. It is a foundation that will also call for the generosity and creativity of the entire Congregation.

The District of India has made available for five years two religious sisters to support this new mission. This is a brave and generous gesture by India, celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Foundation in India.

The various celebrations that will take place during this jubilee year will be concrete opportunities to talk about the two new foundations, Vietnam and Malawi, and to involve all the Marianist Family, as well as other family and friends attending, inviting them to lend their supportive encouragement as well as their economic support.

These will be extraordinary occasions to celebrate a past that fills us with gratitude, and a future that appeals to our creativity and generosity, to our ability to extend ourselves once again, being both challenged and surprised.

STEPS FOUNDATION IN MALAWI - Diocese of Karonga

Here is a summary of the steps agreed upon in dialogue with the African Councils and India:

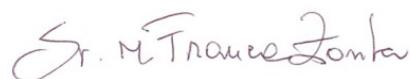
- ✚ The new community will be formed by four sisters:
 - Two of Africa Region: Sr. Amelie Alawi and Sr. Chantal Ateyo
 - Two of India District: their names will be announced later.
- ✚ Residing in Karonga for three months, mid-August through mid-November 2016, will be Sr. Amelie and Sr. Chantal, in order to know the reality and be on site at the time of the opening of school in August, and its official opening in November. The Sisters will stay in a house intended for teaching staff, pending the construction of the convent already in the project.

After these three months, Sr. Amelie will be in Rome for a period of renewal. Sr. Chantal will be in Togo or Ivory Coast.
- ✚ April 2017: Welcoming in Rome, at the Generalate, for the Sisters who will be part of the new community, for a time of preparation and integration.
- ✚ August 2017: Departure for the new community in Malawi.

We are very grateful to the Marianist Brothers of the Eastern Africa Region, who are celebrating their golden jubilee, for the support they are giving us, and in particular to their SM community of Karonga.

Dear Sisters, let us invoke the blessing and the breath of the Holy Spirit on the missionary journey that once again pushes the Congregation to undertake, with humility and trust, new ways of teaching people to love and serve the Son of God, in the Name of Mary.

With profound gratitude to God and to each of you, I greet you with affection together with my Councilors.



Sr. Franca Zonta
Mother General