

MAY 2024 | NUMBER 16

SAGESSE INTERNATIONALE



**AGRICULTURE
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



IN THIS EDITION



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THE THREE SISTERS[1]: A METAPHOR IN INTERDEPENDENCE AND RECIPROCITY

Sr. Marie-Reine Gauthier, General Councillor



Over the past year, our nightly news have been raising our awareness of the challenges facing farmers in the context of climate change, and the urgent need to think about farming in a different way. What if we were to contemplate how different plant species interact with each other? Perhaps we would discover a wisdom for human life. Robin Wall Kimmerer recounts this wisdom discovered by the First Nations of America. Plants tell a story," she says, "not by what they say but by what they do.

So it is with three plants, known as the Three Sisters: maize, beans and squash, which nourish people, the earth and the imagination, showing us how we might live together.

The Three Sisters planted together, when they grow, teach us a lesson in reciprocity. The corn, with its rigid stalk that shoots skywards, provides support for the bean plant, allowing it to extend its vine towards the sun. In turn, the squash forms large leaves, like umbrellas, which discourage caterpillars from attacking the bean plant, and which retain the moisture preventing other plants from growing.

The roots of all three plants provide each other with what they need to grow, be productive and stay in the ground.

The metaphor of the Three Sisters teaches us that the most important knowledge is that of one's unique gift and how to use it in the world. Individuality is cherished and nurtured, because for the whole to flourish, each of us must be strong in our identity and carry our gifts with conviction, so that we can share them with others. These three plants are a visible manifestation of what a community can become when its members understand and share their gifts. Let's use our gifts to care for each other, work together and all will



be nourished.

There's a 4th partner in the Three Sisters garden: the gardener. We are the gardeners who clear the land, sow it, remove the weeds, harvest the fruit, save the seeds over the winter and replant them in the spring. We are the midwives of their gift. We cannot live without them, and it is just as true that they cannot live without us. We also belong to reciprocity.

They cannot fulfil their responsibilities without us fulfilling ours. The stalk of the corn, the leaf of the squash and the root of the bean without a word embody the knowledge of relationship. When we stand together, a whole emerges that transcends the individual. Every gift is multiplied in relationship.

In this time of Chapter, may each of us discover her distinctive gift, offer it in reciprocity and allow the Body, we form, to become food for the world.



[1] Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants*, Milkweed editions 2013, Canada..



MOVING TOWARDS FOOD SECURITY

Sr. Devotta Ng'oma, Malawi

The staple food of Malawi is maize. If the people have not eaten maize product, “**Nsima**”, they will say they have not eaten anything.

Malawi of late has been experiencing the effect of climate change like drought, floods, cyclone, landslide, dry spell and many others. These natural disasters are affecting the production of maize and other crops in the country which is leading to “**hunger**”.

To ensure food security other crops like potatoes and cassava, that do not need much rain are grown in order to ensure that the people have something to eat in these difficult moments.

Our Lady of Wisdom Community is one of the communities of the Daughters of Wisdom found in the Archdiocese of Blantyre.

This community is very much aware that food security is one of the greatest challenges in the world as a whole and Malawi in particular.

This year 2024 as a community we managed to plant not only maize but also sweet potatoes to ensure food security and to encourage other people to do the same.

Sweet potatoes are **starchy foods** and have some benefits such as potassium that helps in controlling blood pressure and have an abundance of magnesium that reduces the risk of stroke.

Furthermore, they are rich in vitamin C which is very essential for the body to produce collagen and vitamin A that prevent the drying out of the body. **As a community we will benefit from it.**

Sweet potatoes can be eaten in many ways like, one can boil, roast, fry and even prepare sweet potato fritters which can be used as snacks. In Malawi we can also use the leaves as a vegetable which has a lot vitamin C and Iron and it boosts immunity.



Another benefit from this plant is that it **improves digestive health** and also reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases among others.



The growing of sweet potatoes will help the community in food security and sustainability. Some of sweet potatoes will be used to feed our students who are living at the Daughters of Wisdom hostel. **This will supplement their diet and some of it will be sold to the people around.**

Our garden is a model to many people that they should not only rely on maize crop, which is facing challenges nowadays due to less rain but, they should plant sweet potatoes as a supplement to the diet and to ensure food security in the country. The good thing is that it is grown easily.



WORKING THE LAND AT THE NOVICIATE IN THE LIGHT OF SPIRITUALITY

Sisters Marie-Alice Mingot,
Shwasney Gordina Poutchama
Estimé, Michelène Saint Louis,
Haïti

Just as we take care of our body to keep it healthy by giving it what it needs, so must we care for the Earth, **"our mother and our common home"**. It is important to nurture her so that she remains fertile as she bears and nourishes us. She is our nurturing mother who never rejects her children, always generous towards them, despite the poor treatment they inflict on this '*Good Mother*'.

After studying the module on **"Creative Wisdom"**, we saw the need to apply our understanding of spirituality by developing a new perspective on 'working the land'. Before arriving at the novitiate, we did not really have an interest in the land, especially in our Haitian culture where it is not really valued, although the country is essentially agricultural.

This approach opened our eyes by taking us out of ourselves, leading us to reject indifference, ignorance, negligence, and many other bad attitudes that distance us from the cradle that welcomed us at birth.



Creative Wisdom came to till our inner soil

Some of us did not even know the names of trees, medicinal plants, etc. We arbitrarily cut flowers, taking them whenever, without need, without truly wanting them. We were content to consume what we found in the land without questioning, without being grateful. Our plastic packaging, our toxic waste, was thrown here and there after use, without concern for the consequences it could have on the land.

But Creative Wisdom came to till our inner soil by starting to **detox us from our bad behaviors towards the land**. It resonated in our entire being, the number 35 of the Love of Eternal Wisdom in a whole new way:

"If the power of Eternal Wisdom has shone so brightly in the creation, beauty, and order of the universe, it has shone even more in the creation of man, since he is its admirable masterpiece, the living image of his beauty and perfections, the great vessel of his graces, the admirable treasure of his riches, and his unique

vicar on earth."

Vicars of Wisdom, Image of his beauty and perfections! Wow! We, therefore, have a duty to continue his work in creation. **The awareness of our responsibility towards creation has led to concrete commitments:**

- Sorting waste,
- Cleaning trees (lemon trees, mango trees, orange trees, cherry trees) of spider webs that suffocate them,
- Freeing the land from weeds, dead branches, plastics, glass pieces, and toxic waste to help it breathe,
- Creating nurseries (for papaya trees, orange trees, lemon trees, etc.),
- Making compost to serve as natural fertilizer,
- Taking measures within our reach to water the land to keep it fresh and spread its good scent.

Witnesses of the generosity of our Mother Earth

Our efforts and goodwill are generously rewarded by our 'Mother Earth'. She gives us her tasty fruits:

Sustainable Earth

papayas, bananas, cherries, etc. In this period when fruits are becoming increasingly rare, we appreciate finding what we need in our garden.



The result of our efforts can only encourage and support our commitments to the Earth. Wisdom truly shows itself at work in creation!

Thus, every Friday morning, the appointment is in the garden:

- We till the land,
- We add supports to the banana trees to prevent them from being knocked down by the wind;
- We clear the garden of plastics, and we transplant our nurseries.
- We practice marcottage and cutting,

All of this becomes exciting. For better management and to lighten the load of waste, we reuse pots by

planting flowers in them or transforming them into planters. They also serve us to prepare our nurseries.

This first step allowed us to experience this passage from the gospel *"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."*

After sowing seeds of all kinds in the ground, we feel that nothing is happening, we think they are lost, no more hope. But not at all! These seeds die, we do not see them; after some time, here is life appearing: buds, flowers, seeds, and fruits.

They die to bring forth fruit in abundance. This experience also refers us to our formation, we must die to ourselves to bear fruit in abundance.

These experiences have allowed us to adopt agriculture as a new art to continue the work of God because we are the managers of the universe, and we learn a lot from this great book.

As novices, we are filled with a deep desire to contribute to the preservation of Creation. We have done everything to ground this desire. Throughout this first year at the novitiate, activities and celebrations have marked our journey; thus, we were led to

compose poems and let our hearts speak.

We are called to be a solid bridge, drawing its materials from Spirituality in order to reach the wounded earth, for a good action has positive repercussions throughout creation, just as a bad action has negative consequences on the whole.



Therefore, let's strengthen our ecological commitments, go all the way in our daily choices to respond to the cry of distress of our Mother Earth; thus, we will enjoy more of the fruits of creation, for in caring for her, we care for ourselves.

ACTING TOGETHER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sr Lamerchie Estinfort, Haïti



The Montfort Institute for Deaf Children regularly organizes a series of practical activities aimed at

supporting its students and those from schools in the metropolitan area, in the educational perspective of sustainable development.

The Montfort Institute, together with the Institute's Agricultural Farm, is committed to **raising student awareness about Sustainable Development through observation and experimentation.**

We work with our students to make the Montfort Institute's farm a center of change and personal transformation. Additionally, the farm serves not only to introduce them to agricultural professions, through vegetable gardening (fruits and vegetables) and farming (meat, eggs, milk, chickens), but also to value them.

We are determined to support the youth and children **on the path of personal development,** with the conviction that this dedication will make them active citizens for Haiti.

Our young people are thus called to learn the path that liberates and leads to progress as well as to Sustainable Development, **"a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,"** as defined by the United Nations.

It must be economically efficient, socially equitable, and ecologically sustainable.

Activities Undertaken

We organized a series of specific actions under the theme: **"Acting Together for Sustainable Development"**. We also implemented a component focused on the selection of goods and waste sorting. Thus, from the beginning of the harvest, students can already begin to identify biodegradable waste and apply themselves to understand its usefulness in the reproduction and multiplication of plants.

Besides, they have become familiar with the comparative approach to recognize the disadvantages of non-biodegradable waste for agriculture and livestock.

Towards Food Self-Sufficiency

Over the past four years, largely marked by insecurity, socio-politico-economic turmoil, the development of the Montfort Institute for Deaf

Children's farm has proven to be an essential recourse for the continuous support of the students and employees of the Institute. The farm allows us to achieve, in part, **food self-sufficiency**; this is beneficial for feeding the internal and external students daily with short-circuit products, fresh and quality products.



Also, the farm serves not only to initiate our students into agricultural professions but also to valorize them in the eyes of society. Moreover, the farm still allows us to **awaken minds to the stakes of sustainable development**, thanks to workshops open to all ages of our school.

We are now convinced that it is possible for everyone to embark on the responsibility of doing well and to

commit where work already contributes to enriching the interconnection of all domains of human life. It is desirable that schools and families teach young people **to cultivate behaviors and attitudes that value and lead to sustainable development.**



THE WOUNDED EARTH

Composed by Sr Marie Alice Mingot, Haïti

*I was like a tree planted by a spring,
Where my lush foliage shielded me from
turmoil. The song of silence filled me
with joy, The fruits of my womb showed
how happy I was.*

*Always in a good mood, Nothing could
scare me. Tranquility lived in my being,
Allowing me to graze peacefully.*

*I yielded well To all who cared for me
deeply. I never refused to bear them, In
me, they found their safety.*

*But alas! The hardened heart of my
keeper pushes me to diminish into
nothingness. He cuts down my trees
without replacing them, My beauty risks
being erased.*

*I'm stripped of my riches, Leading to
drought. I'm trampled without reason,
My soul is filled with itching.*

*How to find my initial peace? How to
taste the light again? My silence is
turned to noise, Destroying me.*

*Stop polluting me with your waste,
Realize the importance of creating a
project. If you leave me in filth, I can
mistreat you.*



But you start to taste the result, My aridity comes from my poor state. My seasons are varied, Leaving you so troubled.

Oh! Man without conscience, Put aside your ignorance. Throw far behind you your vices, Plunging you into greed.

Do you want to resurrect me? Cast away your wickedness. Can't you hear my cries of pain? Respond before I die.

I do not want the course of my end, I want to feed those who are hungry. I am Mother Earth, filled with bruises, Seeking to heal my wounds.



TOWARDS EQUITY IN AGRICULTURE: UNANIMA'S FIGHT FOR WOMEN

Sr. Cathy Sheehan, Usa



UNANIMA International – a non-governmental organization (NGO) with United Nations status – represents **23** Congregations of Women Religious, comprising 25,000 people in **85** countries. UNANIMA International's focus is women and children. ***"The welfare of women and children, especially those living in extreme poverty, is central to our mission and everything we do."***

The theme of this edition of Sagesse Internationale is sustainable agriculture and development. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG1) is dedicated to ending poverty and is intricately linked to SDG2 dedicated to ending hunger. SDG2 promotes sustainable agriculture. **In many countries women make up 40-50% of farm workers.** Women are essential to agriculture, but often are not acknowledged for their labor and not given any status because they lack land ownership rights.

The aim of the **2030** Sustainable Development Agenda strives to ***"leave no one behind."*** To achieve this, women need to be empowered and recognized in the agricultural industry through just wages, training and education, and reformed policies and rules of family land succession and inheritance. **We can help by advocating for the many women who bring food to their family and community tables around the world.**

THE 24 HOURS OF THE FRIENDS OF WISDOM AROUND THE WORLD: A SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE

Sylvie Abraham



More than **218 Friends and Daughters of Wisdom** took part in a virtual marathon of 24 hours of Friends of Wisdom around the world on 4th of May. The gathering took place between the two feasts of our founders, Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort and Blessed Marie-Louise Trichet. It was a first: bringing together Friends from the four corners of the world to forge new links and enjoy a time of renewal and sharing.

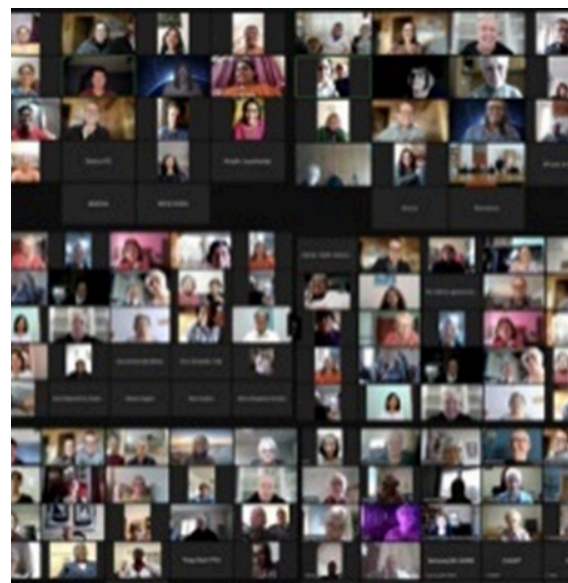
Using the Zoom connection, **14 countries** took part in one or other of the **5 international meetings** organized by language.

The virtual meetings began in English in Asia with Papua New Guinea and India. They continued in Italian with Italy, followed by a second group in English with Malawi, Great Britain and the United States. This was followed by a French-language

meeting with Madagascar, Canada, Haiti, France and Belgium. Finally, a Spanish-language group made up mainly of people from Peru, Colombia, Argentina and Ecuador brought this round-the-world trip to a close.

After a time of introduction, often animated by the joy of meeting each other and/or getting to know each other and discovering the diversity of our geographical origins, we took a time of prayer to invoke the Trinity with Canticle No. 141 of Father de Montfort: **"Come, Father of Lights"** translated into the 4 languages for the event.

Then we watched a video recorded last year at the International Gathering of Montfort Associates. This interview with Sr Anne-Marie David (FDLS) opened us up to reading the Bible as an encounter with a person, with the Living One.



Experiences

The participants, divided into small groups, shared their personal reactions to this message. After a review in the large group, where some beautiful and meaningful words emerged, a second video, a meeting with **Father Pasinato** (SMM), challenged us about our baptismal commitment.

This was the opportunity for a second sharing in small groups, different from the first to facilitate mutual understanding. The discussions were rich, and we heard powerful testimonies of faith and hope, ranging from the *"marvellous, life-giving grace of a personal encounter with God in the Bible as a faithful companion on the road and in life"* to the richness and grace of baptism in our lives and the demands that this entails.

The discussions also brought out words of courage and strength in the difficult situations of certain countries. Other expressions challenged or encouraged further

discussion. I personally remember this word of faith from the French-speaking group: "Nous sommes le paradis de Dieu" ("We are God's paradise"). The meetings ended with the Magnificat prayer to give thanks for these magical moments of meeting and sharing across borders.

A final video of a few minutes showed us the evolution and growth of the Friends of Wisdom tree planted on **August 9th 2003** during an international gathering in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre and its transformation, **20 years later, on August 9th 2023** surrounded by the Friends and Daughters of Wisdom.

This tree symbolizes the growth and vitality of the Friends of Wisdom in the wake of the Daughters of Wisdom throughout the world, united around their mission statement: **Together, let us love, live and proclaim Wisdom!**



August 9, 2023

A LOVE FOR THE CITY'S PLANTS AND GARDENS

Sr Gilma López, Colombia



When we hear about sustainable agriculture, we imagine large companies, costly products, machines, etc. But in reality, it's about knowing **how to use what nature itself offers us**, especially coffee beans, how to take advantage not only of the last drop but also of the last cell, like its waste or grounds! Coffee waste, what to do with it? How can it be reused?

Here's a little tip that serves as pure fertilizer for the vegetable garden or garden.

Coffee waste is collected in a large plastic container and mixed with the

fertilizer you will use to plant the plants you want to grow. Moreover, the leftover brewed coffee, if it is no longer to be consumed, is used to water the plants.

Since coffee has beneficial properties, it finally completes its cycle, 'coffee is born from the earth and returns to the earth'.



HISTORY CAPSULE: THE DAUGHTERS OF WISDOM ROUTE IN THE NETHERLANDS

Xavier Le Roux

In **1881**, a new chapter opened for the Daughters of Wisdom with their arrival in the Netherlands, marking an important step in the expansion of their mission inspired by Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort. They established their first convent in Schimmert, in a converted farmhouse, laying the foundations for their educational and charitable work.

Two years later, in **1883**, they introduced sewing classes for village girls, responding to the growing demand for education from local families. This initiative soon evolved into a boarding school that also

History capsule

offered French classes. Royal authorization in 1887 established the boarding school as a leading educational institution. In **1889**, under the direction of Miss Bertha Berger, the first lay headmistress, the **Schimmert** boarding school continued to expand and diversify.

It now offered a range of academic disciplines, thanks to the sisters acquiring the necessary diplomas to teach a variety of subjects, reinforcing the quality and breadth of the education on offer.

At the turn of the **20th century**, the mission of the Daughters of Wisdom underwent a new evolution. They now also became involved in caring for the sick and disabled, actively contributing to the development of Catholicism in the region.

This period of growth and diversification was, however, interrupted by the trials of the Second World War. In **1944**, the community faced a severe famine. With only one kilo of potatoes and three slices of bread a week, the

sisters developed ingenious strategies for survival, hiding food and provisions under their clothes and venturing out to feed the needy.

After the Second World War, the Daughters of Wisdom entered an era of reorganization. In **1955**, the Netherlands and Denmark formed the Dutch Province. This period coincided with the Second Vatican Council, which brought significant reforms to the Church. These changes paved the way for the major developments of the early **21st century**, leading to the transformation of the Dutch Province into a Region in **2007**, and the move to Wijchen.

Today, the Daughters of Wisdom in the Netherlands continue their presence, embodied by their closeness to one another and to their neighbors, by their unwavering support of the Congregation's mission, and by a simplicity of life that respects Creation.



Recreational novices.

COMMITMENTS IN THE CONGREGATION

First profession

Haiti

Sr Maïtide MERISIER
Sr Aminay PAPAYOUTE

January 21, 2024



IN MEMORIAM

"I know in whom I have placed my hope..."

Daughters of Wisdom

			Birth	Profession
Décembre 2023				
16	Sr Denise Beauvais Sr Denise-Marie	Maison Accueil-Sagesse Ottawa	16-07-25	02-08-45
19	Sr Anne du Christ Ooms Anna Francisca	Tournai Belgique	25-10-40	02-08-64
27	Sr Suzanne Masset Suzanne-Marie de l'Eucharistie	Notre-Dame de la Sagesse St Laurent	10-06-30	02-08-51
28	Sr Maria del Carmen Roza Gutiérrez Carmen María de Jesús	Enfermería María Luisa-Bogotá Colombie	04-01-32	02-08-64
29	Sr Alexandra Butruille Madeleine-Alexandra	Notre-Dame de la Sagesse St Laurent	02-10-25	02-08-49
30	Sr Elena Dello Spirito Santo Mattiuzzo Elda María Antonia	Castiglione Italie	21-03-41	02-08-64
Janvier 2024				
05	Sr Henri du Christ Marie-Louise Fréard	N.D. de la Sagesse St Laurent	24-12-31	02-12-60
08	Sr Tarcisia dell'Assunzione Saja Mafalda	Castiglione-Accoglienza Italie	25-06-25	02-02-65
12	Sr Maria Inés Montaña López María Miguel de Lourdes	Bogotá - Enfermería Colombie	30-05-34	02-08-58
14	Sr Élisabeth Puaud Brigitte-Marie de Jésus	N.D. de la Sagesse St Laurent	26-04-31	02-02-52
16	Sr Colette Richard François-Marie de la Trinité	La Chartreuse - M.L. Trichet France	08-01-29	02-08-52
30	Sr Thérèse de Notre-Dame Anne-Marie Ollivier	N.D. de la Sagesse St Laurent	03-09-29	02-08-52
Février 2024				
02	Sr Marie-Joseph Béliard Yves de Marie Reine	N.D. de la Sagesse St Laurent	22-05-29	02-02-59
05	Sr Lise Richer Paul-Marie du Cœur de Jésus	Maison Accueil-Sagesse Ottawa	19-02-36	02-08-56
10	Sr Rosa Adela de la Eucaristía Ana Celina Alférez Velásquez	Enfermería María Luisa Bogotá	12-03-41	02-08-60
15	Sr Annick Le Roux Annick de Notre-Dame	N.D. de la Sagesse St Laurent	05-02-28	02-02-55

IN MEMORIAM

Mars 2024

24	Sr Marie de Sainte Martine Renée Menu	La Chartreuse - M.L. Trichet France	28-11-29	18-09-50
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Avril 2024

02	Sr Daniela di Santa Maria Azzola Lucia Luigina	Castiglione - Accoglienza Italie	03-03-31	02-08-55
10	Sr Marie-Josèphe Guston Henriette de Notre-Dame	N.D. de la Sagesse St Laurent	03-02-33	02-02-55
20	Sr Maria Angela de l'Annunciazione Anna Maria Botticelli	Castiglione Italie	19-11-40	02-08-59
23	Sr Marie-Pauline Guézenoc Pauline du Saint Sacrement	La Chartreuse - M.L. Trichet France	15-03-29	02-02-49
25	Sr Fredesminda Ríos Martínez Francisca del Sagrado Corazón	Bogotá Colombie	10-11-35	02-08-55
29	Sr Gabrielle Poirier Bernadette-Marie de l'Immaculée	N.D. de la Sagesse St Laurent	09-03-27	02-02-58
30	Sr Joanne Zielinski Edward Marie of the Immaculate	Port Jefferson New York	20-05-38	02-02-58

Mai 2024

04	Sr Albina dell'Immacolata Lauretta Giovanna Cazzaro	Castiglione Italie	07-12-37	02-08-59
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Compagnie de Marie

Décembre 2023

22	P. Amato Prisco	Bergamo Italie	91 ans	70ans
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Janvier 2024

23	P. Tarcisio Marroquín Serrato	Bogotá Colombie	90 ans	66 ans
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Février 2024

03	P. Jean-Paul Beck	St Laurent-sur-Sèvre France	96 ans	72 ans
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IN MEMORIAM

03	P. Jean-Paul Beck	St Laurent-sur-Sèvre France	96 ans	72 ans
10	P. Angelo Assolari	Bergamo Italie	74 ans	51 ans
11	P. Varaprasad Varugonda	Mysore Inde	53 ans	31 ans
15	P. Benedicto Villalba Mora	Bogotá Colombie	98 ans	75 ans
17	P. Manuel Gonçalves Peixoto	Fátima Portugal	80 ans	62 ans

Mars 2024

19	F. Maurizio Rubini	Bergamo Italie	81 ans	51 ans
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Mai 2024

04	P. Jacques Maessen	West Borneo Indonésie	83 ans	62 ans
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Frères de St-Gabriel

Décembre 2023

06	F. François Braguier	La Hillière France	90 ans	70 ans
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Janvier 2024

17	F. François Peleman	Liedekerke Belgique	94 ans	77 ans
23	F. Gérald Vasseur	Nantes France	84 ans	66 ans
25	F. Mathew K. Alexander	Hyderabad Inde	66 ans	44 ans
31	F. Simeon Petiteau	Bangkok Thaïlande	94 ans	74 ans

Février 2024

09	F. Sylvester Bara	Ranchi Inde	80 ans	58 ans
10	F. James N.A.	Rujewa Tanzanie	62 ans	42 ans
26	F. Norbert L'Hermitte	La Hillière France	93 ans	72 ans

Avril 2024

22	F. Alexius	Hyderabad Inde	87 ans	66 ans
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Dear Sisters,

I join the General Team in wishing you a joyful celebration of the month of Mary, amidst the brightness of the renewing spring.

May this season of blooming and spiritual renewal bring you peace and comfort, and may it nourish your faith and love for Mary in the months to come.

Xavier Le Roux