



mission

magazine

FALL 2023



MISSIONARY VOLUNTEERS

Fr. Dave Brokke, SOLT

WYD LISBON

Sr. Stella Maris Abbott, SOLT

CALLED, COMMITTED AND SENT

Rosalie Buegler



SOCIETY of OUR LADY
of the Most Holy Trinity

Laborers for the Harvest

A message from the **GENERAL PRIEST SERVANT**



This past July, the entire SOLT community held its 8th General Chapter at a retreat center in Long Island, New York. It was truly a very blessed gathering of SOLT members from around the world, including places like Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Thailand, Belize and Mexico. It was an opportunity for us to listen to the Holy Spirit who speaks to us through interior inspirations during prayer and liturgy, but also very importantly, through one another. By having representatives from so many SOLT missions around the world, we were truly able to listen and seek God's direction for the next five years of our community life.

While there were many important topics covered during the General Chapter, one

topic that was particularly emphasized was the promotion of vocations. The members of the General Chapter believed very strongly that as a community we need to be even more solicitous for future vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Some of the directives involved special Holy Hours on Thursdays (a special day to remember the priesthood), more frequent Mass intentions for an increase in vocations, and quite interestingly, a return to the practice of prayer and fasting during ember days.

Ember days are the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday following the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross (September 14), the Feast of St. Lucy (December 14), Ash Wednesday, and Pentecost. The ember days more or

To the right:

Members of the Chapter stop for a picture following an afternoon fire alarm.

Next page:

After the Chapter, the Sisters from the Asia Pacific region visited several sites, including the parish of Fr. Jim Flanagan in Lowell, MA.





We are dependent upon God for every vocation to the priesthood and religious life, and we beg the Lord to send more laborers into the harvest.

less coincided with the four seasons and were a way to give thanks to God for the harvest and fruit of the earth, and to acknowledge in humility that we are dependent upon Him for all of the blessings of creation. In humbly asking God's assistance with the harvest of the earth, the connection to observing fasting, prayer and penance on ember days for the sake of vocations becomes clear: we are dependent upon God for every vocation to the priesthood and religious life, and we beg the Lord to send more laborers into the harvest. We pray that our various initiatives for vocational promotion will bear great fruit.

As always, we thank you for all of your support and prayers for the members of SOLT and all of the people whom we serve. Perhaps in a special way at this time, you can also join us in praying for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life, praying that people's hearts would be open and willing to respond to the call of the Good Shepherd to be laborers in the Lord's vineyard.

FR. PETER MARSALEK, SOLT is originally from Burlington, Ontario. He currently serves as the General Priest Servant and resides in Corpus Christi, Texas.



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*It is with joy we announce
our new General Servants and their Councils:*

Very Rev. Peter Marsalek, General Priest Servant

Rev. Anthony Blount, Vicar General

Rev. Fausto Rodel Malanyaon, Second Councilor

Rosalie Buerger, General Lay Servant

Matthew Moore, General Councilor

Maureen Murray General Councilor

Dan Van Buskirk, General Councilor

Sr. Mary Aloysius of Jesus Kim, General Sister Servant

Sr. Mary Helen de la Pena, Vicar General

Sr. Megan Mary Thibodeau, Councilor

Sr. Mary Elizabeth Albers, Councilor

Sr. Mary Elisabeth of the Coronation Marks, General Secretary



Clockwise:

Sr. Mary Elisabeth praying at the site of the two towers.

Sisters stopped by the shrine of St. Elizabeth Seton.

Visiting an ice cream shop in Huntington.

Taking a short stroll in Central Park.

Recreation time during the Chapter.

Running into friends on the Staten Island Ferry.

Grateful for SOLT Missionary Volunteers

Over the past three years, I have had the privilege and honor of being the chaplain for our SOLT Missionary Volunteers on Turtle Mountain Reservation in Belcourt, North Dakota. I was asked to help restart and revitalize the SOLT Missionary Volunteer (SMV) program, and I could not have asked for a better start to my priesthood. It has been such a blessing to accompany these young men and women who, after college, give a year or two of their life to serve alongside us. Watching these young men and women pour themselves out into St. Ann's School and youth ministry, into the homebound, nursing homes, and retirement homes, and into the food pantry has been such a gift. They come with enthusiasm and

fervor to serve and to love; they do so with such energy and joy, and they flourish!

Their impact on the community is palpable. Denise Marcellais, a parishioner of St. Ann's, said, "They reached out to our community with big hearts, and when they come, they give of themselves totally. There were years we didn't have anybody, and you can feel it, as a person, as a parishioner. It was so good that they came back again. When they came back, you could just feel the vibrancy of life, and it was exciting and happy and joyful. That is what they bring to our community."





Previous page left: Fr. Dave, Fr. David and Kateri glance out of the overlook of Theodore Roosevelt National Park as part of the Missionary Volunteers orientation in ND.

Previous page right: Summer camp counselors gather at Butte St. Paul. Mass was celebrated there on the Feast of St. Paul by Fr. Belcourt in thanksgiving for surviving a blizzard.

Left: Claire Jackson, now an aspirant with SOLT, teaches her 3rd and 4th grade class.

Right: SOLT Missionary Volunteers gather with Fr. Dave to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus on Easter.



Duane Gourneau, a leader in the community and a lifelong parishioner commented, “The volunteers make a huge difference in our community. They’re involved in so many things. I’m so grateful, especially to these young ones that come here. We appreciate them so much. I don’t know what we’d do without them. These volunteers could be any place, in school, in a good job, and here they come, to an underserved community like a Native Reservation. I’m just grateful that they chose St. Ann’s—to help us and to be a part of us.”

The SMV’s also help bring our Ecclesial Family Team together. Fr. Michael Slovak, pastor of St. Ann’s, said, “What the volunteers brought when they came here was a unification of our team.” It is no wonder that Fr. Flanagan asked them to serve with us, “So I would go to the different colleges across the country. What I would do was to ask the students to come out into the missions and to serve in the summertime. After doing that, they would come to work in Our Lady’s Society full-time, some for many years. We were fulfilling the plan Our Lady had revealed to me, of ecclesial teams in the vocations.”

In North Dakota, our SOLT Missionary Volunteers have helped revitalize our school and helped increase its enrollment. They have jolted our summer camp program and boosted our youth group. Many, many of our vocations have historically come from our SOLT Missionary Volunteer Program. I am excited to see what other blessings they will bring to our missions and to our community!

Fr. Dave



FR. DAVE BROKKE, SOLT is originally from Baltimore, Maryland. He was ordained to the sacred priesthood in 2020 and has been serving at the Turtle Mountain Reservation since then. This summer, he began serving as Vocation Servant for the Clerical Society. He resides in Detroit, Michigan.



WYD Lisbon 2023

A World Youth Day Centered in the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus.

This summer, I ventured with nineteen young people from the diocese of Corpus Christi to the 2023 World Youth Day events in Lisbon, Portugal. I was asked to accompany them as a spiritual mentor during their seven-day pilgrimage, but instead, I found that it was they who ended up mentoring and inspiring me with their whole-hearted faith. One of the most inspiring experiences of a World Youth Day is witnessing young people from around the world come together in prayer and joy. According to the organizers, there was a representative from every country in the world except the Maldives, and the first and only Catholic priest from the Buddhist nation of Bhutan was present! Despite the diversity of peoples, languages, culture, and liturgical practices, over a million people were united together in joy because they believe in one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church.

I have attended two other World Youth Days: WYD Toronto 2002 and WYD Krakow 2016. Both were incredible experiences in different ways; in Toronto, the call to religious life was kindled in my heart through the words of John Paul II. In Poland, I heard the call to deep holiness from Pope Francis. At WYD Lisbon, it was the voice of the young people that spoke first to my heart, and then Pope Francis



Above: Gathering of the young people during WYD, Visiting a church for the catechesis session



Left: Members of the group from SOLT preparing for the liturgy

Right: Fr. Beau Schweitzer, SOLT, representing Belize and Sr. Stella Maris, SOLT, representing Corpus Christi, Texas, met up during WYD.

answered simply and tenderly. Perhaps we are familiar with the message that each of us is loved uniquely by God for who we are, but Pope Francis' persistence in setting aside his script and speaking spontaneously with us, always repeating that same message of how we are loved by the Lord, took the form of an intimate conversation, a listening and responding, that lasted over four days.

The final event of a World Youth Day is the gathering of pilgrims in a large space to celebrate Mass with the Pope, which is preceded by a night vigil. During the night, Pope Francis addressed the young people one last time. Again, he took up the subject of Christ loving us as we are, stating, "My little ones, I see you, I see each of you... Jesus sees you, and He loves you." He continued to reassure each of us that we are precious in the eyes of the Church, in the eyes of Christ, and that we had been seen and heard. After speaking in the presence of over one million people, our Holy Father exposed

our Lord in the Most Holy Eucharist for adoration. The silence of that immense and diverse crowd was so intense that with eyes closed, it felt as if you were the only one there. At that moment, the indefatigable message of Pope Francis sank into our hearts, as we each felt seen, loved, and known. Only the Lord in his Eucharistic presence could bring about such deep rest, healing, and great hope for all who were present there.

It is fitting that in this year of Eucharistic Renewal in the United States, Pope Francis would lead us back to our true identity as daughters and sons of God through the Eucharist.

Sr. Stella Maris



SR. MARIA STELLA MARIS ABBOTT, SOLT was born in England but grew up in the Cayman Islands. She professed her first vows in 2012 and recently moved to Detroit, Michigan. There she serves postulants in formation for religious life.



Called, Committed, and Sent

As the General Lay Servant, one of the first questions I am asked is, "What does a lay member in your community do?" Our founder, Fr. Jim Flanagan, taught that it is not what you do, but who you are. So, for the past year, our 18 new lay members have had to learn a new way of thinking, based on who they are, to understand their identity in the Church and in the SOLT community.

As SOLT lay members, we are *called, committed, and sent*.

We are called.

The Lord calls each of us to serve him in very different ways. Some He calls to the parish life, others to be volunteers for various organizations, but for us in SOLT, we have been specifically called by the Most Holy Trinity to belong to SOLT and participate in the charism of the community as lay people.

We are committed.

We live out this calling through shared spiritual practices, and we abide by lay statutes that govern and guide us in our SOLT Lay way of life, our lay association, our ecclesial family team, and our SOLT community. The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity tells us, "The success of the lay apostolate depends on the laity's living in union with Christ." (AA 4) Fr. Flanagan taught us that our fruitfulness depends on our living in union with the Most Holy Trinity and bringing all people to that unity. That is the work we share with our priests, brothers, and sisters. We simultaneously serve SOLT and our families through an integrated life. It is not an either/or situation, nor is it a service out of our surplus.

Above: New Committed Lay Members in Kansas City, Missouri



Above: Deacon Ken Dawson leading the formation session in Kansas City, Missouri

We are sent.

Our community is apostolic and missionary. We bring the charisms of our community with us into all aspects of our lay vocation, and in turn, we bring the lay vocation into all aspects of our SOLT community. Our missionary spirit allows us to bring Christ to the people so they can return to Christ and to the Church. Some new lay members will serve domestically in the United States, while others will serve in foreign missions.

As lay people, we are called to leaven the temporal order, to evangelize, and to witness in our families, places of employment, and other secular areas of society that are often not reached by the Church. We are called to do that within the context of the charism and mission of our community. It changes not only how we fulfill our vocational call but also how the world can be transformed by our SOLT spirituality and community. When one witnesses something different than what the world has to offer, it can be a powerful form of evangelization. This is the

beauty of who we are as SOLT lay members and how we serve. This is often ordinary and done in the nooks and crannies of the world, and the impact can be quite moving.

Praise to the Most Holy Trinity for sending more laborers in the vineyard! A heartfelt thanks to our newest members for their commitment to SOLT and this great work.

Rosie



Above: Newly committed lay members honoring Our Lady at the conclusion of their commitment ceremony



ROSALIE BUERGLER is the General Lay Servant. She is the youngest daughter of the Sullivan family, the first family that served when SOLT was founded. She is part of the Kansas City ecclesial family team.



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Above: SOLT Sisters take a break during the General Chapter for a day trip to New York City.

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On the front cover: Fr. Beau Schweitzer and Sr. Mary of Holy Hope enjoy recreation time and a break from Chapter deliberations

Right: Members of the Chapter enjoyed visiting St. Patrick's Cathedral during their Sunday day trip to New York City.

