



December 19, 2025

## ***UNANIMA INTERNATIONAL COMES TO COMPLETION***

Sometime in the year 2000, Sr. Rosemary Mangan, USA Provincial at the time, saw a notice in the LCWR Newsletter inviting interested Congregations to form a coalition NGO to advocate at the UN on behalf of Women and Children. She asked Sr. Janice Farnham to contact Sr. Catherine Ferguson, SNJM, who had issued the invitation, and explore the possibility of our joining. In 2001, the Religious of Jesus and Mary, USA Province, were one of six charter members who met to begin the group and choose the name, *UNANIMA INTERNATIONAL*. They met in New York, where the rubble left by the 9/11 was a daily reminder of the needs of our world. In their mission statement, the members committed to work for peace and human dignity through collaboration, education and action regarding:

- Women and Children
- Immigrants and Refugees
- The Welfare of the Planet

Subsequently, the General Chapter of 2001 voted to join as a Congregation. Over the years, RJM's from Pakistan (Catherine Marie Nawal), India (Monica Joseph), Mexico (Christina Hawley) and Africa (Yudith Pereira, then working in Equatorial



Guinea) have traveled to New York and given witness at UN Forums, especially on the status of women. North American RJM's have served as our Congregational Representatives: Srs. Janice Farnham, Kathleen Scanlon, Loretta Knapp, Josée Therrien and Lourdes Vargas. *UNANIMA* grew to include 25 congregations of women religious, with presence in 100 countries. Most recently, the focus has been on homelessness, raising consciousness of this worldwide issue, and seeking remedies.

The decision to terminate as a group has come as congregations face the reality of diminished personnel and resources. Looking at the original mission statement, and what is named there, one can see clearly that the issues mentioned there continue to call for attention and action. For a time, through *UNANIMA*, we and many others benefitted from an increased awareness of the calls for justice coming from our world, and the companionship of others who shared our concerns. We give thanks for what has been given and pray that all we have received will continue to enrich our mission into the future.

The closing message of *UNANIMA'S* director, Sr. Jean Quinn, is attached to Bridges. In the above photo of the Board, our RJM representative, Sr. Lourdes Vargas, is shown in the 2<sup>nd</sup> row, 4<sup>th</sup> from right.

- Sr. Rosemary Mangan

---

## ADVENT - A TIME FOR LIGHT AND SIGHT

Sr. Rose Kelly forwarded Dr. Loli's article below, saying:

*The people here in Jean Rabel are in Advent mode of waiting throughout the year!*

*They are always asking "when are the Ophthalmologist Team coming again?" Loli tries to plan a visit twice a year, Easter and December.*

*Dr. Loli (right), and her faithful companion nurse Carmen Verdugo, are always available, but it takes some organizing to get a team together. People come in their holiday time, and from different hospitals and places of work. There is great rejoicing when they are in town. So many families who need to care for their blind family member come with great expectations, and rarely are disappointed. The blind person can see again and has gained their independence once more! Their waiting is over, but there are already 50 more people on the list for cataract operation who are waiting!*

*Loli has sent out the notice for the Easter visit and is waiting for responses! Hopefully the security situation will improve.*

*Thank you, Loli, Carmen and Dr. Puri Escámez for your courageous and generous service during this last campaign! You have created Light in some many areas this Christmas.*

*Happy Christmas...May you participate in this Star Light!*



Finishing the end of my December visit for the moment, my time of LIVING here in Jean Rabel; I took some time to write about this experience of life, hope and commitment.

It was more than twenty years ago that I arrived here for my first time. During these years, I was always invited by the community of Jesus and Mary here in Jean Rabel; I have been feeling the call of a people who deserve a better life. My reflection has been that the life and the way that we live it, can not be only a matter of serendipity, luck or unluck... If we all are daughters and sons of a God who IS love, the only response must be TO SHARE, trying to change the world to achieve the most dignified life for each and all of human beings. So, I was lucky to find in Haiti the specific way to answer to some of these main questions for me as a person, and as a believer in Jesus the brother for all.

Thanks to my medical training, I have been involved in the health project of Jesus and Mary in Jean Rabel. And, as always, finding new challenges (not always expected). I'm a specialist in Internal Medicine and Infectious and Tropical diseases; I thought it was good enough to work here; but people were asking since the very beginning for attention to their eyes diseases in a department without any ophthalmological resources at all. So, I had to focus a great part of my work in the Ophthalmological Project of Jesus and Mary in Jean Rabel; and I must say it has had its difficulties: a lot of medical equipment, really not very cheap and over all very, very, very heavy, different people involved (ophthalmologists, surgical eye nurses, optometrists), and the formation of Haitian health workers. In any case, we have been coping with all these and other different difficulties and the project has been keeping its objectives year after year. Above, Carmen (left), Puri (center), and Dr. Loli, who is on the ground, are assembling the new laser machine.



These last times things are difficult in Haiti; not many people after knowing the situation and the news arriving from here, were available to come, so the teams had begun to be smaller. This year was even worse, as I only could count on a nurse and myself to come here by October. But I knew people were waiting: blindness is not a gift anywhere, but here is even worse as there is no place for handicap people who cannot work for their survival nor can they support themselves, and being blind by an easily treatable illness like cataract seems hard to support; children failing at school because there is nobody who can prescribe them the glasses they are needing; the Haitian nurses making diagnosis of possible glaucoma which must be reassessed by ophthalmologists...

So after a last call message, we had one ophthalmologist, Dr. Puri Escámez (right), and with her nurse Carmen Verdugo, who has many years of experience here, and the Haitian team, we have had the 2025 Ophthalmological Campaign: one ophthalmologist, and a team of six other people (four Haitian and two Spanish), and over all the determination, the drive, the availability and assistance at all times and for everything of Rose Kelly here; almost 300 patients seen in consultation, including a minor surgery, more than ten patients treated with the new Laser Yag, during no more than eight days. Comparing our numbers with the numbers for the world - which is usually full of resources - our figures are multiplied by ten for us, for the Project, for the people.



When our availability was different, we used to come for the Campaigns around the first days of December, so usually around the Advent time when there are many readings from Isaiah's book and from the gospel, that are using the light, the sight, and the cure for blindness as images of the HOPE that we are all waiting for. May God help all of us to live a more Hopeful Christmas through this small project of LIGHT.

- María-Dolores Herrero "Dr. Loli"

---

## **NOSTALGIA**

After the recent snow in Rhode Island, two of the Sisters visiting St. Timothy's Mission Center took a nostalgic trip back to their years before living and working in Haiti.

Sr. Brittany Galvin and Sr. Jackie Picard built a snowman just outside the dining room.

Even those who weren't thrilled with the appearance of New England "white stuff" were delighted to greet this seasonal visitor.

- Dr. Dee Gallo



---

## **CHRISTMAS GREETINGS - from the USA-Haiti Province**



**“The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light...”**

Isaiah 9:1

**May the gift we celebrate bring you joy and blessings.**

Religious of Jesus and Mary  
USA-Haiti Province

*This e-card will also be sent to our sisters throughout the world.*

---

## **HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THOSE WITH DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

December 1    Natalia Mejía, RJM  
December 9    Liz Cornejo, RJM  
December 16    Vivian Patenaude, RJM



---

## PROVINCE OFFICE

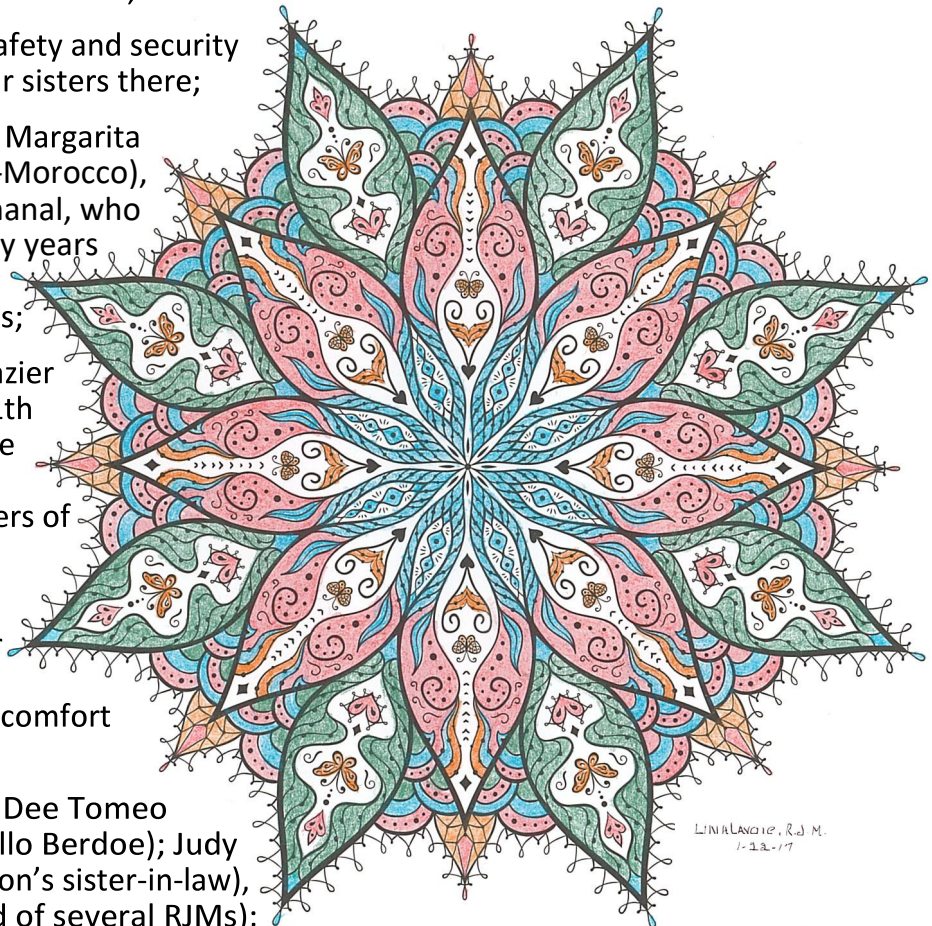
January 2

Next *Bridges* published (articles due by noon Tuesday 12/30)

---

### PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED FOR...

- Michele Higgins, the sister of Sr. Pat Dillon, whose surgery was more complicated than expected, but after a scare, Michele is doing well and greatly appreciates your prayers for her recovery;
- Diane Picard, the sister-in-law of Sr. Jackie Picard, as she continues to recover from surgery for a non-cancerous mass in her head;
- Continuing prayers for the safety and security of the people of Haiti and our sisters there;
- The repose of the soul of Sr. Margarita Fumanal (Province of Spain-Morocco), the sister of Sr. Rosario Fumanal, who has worked with us for many years at the Haiti Mission, and for the comfort of loved ones;
- The repose of the soul of Frazier Meade who died October 11th and for his wife Susan Meade who died January 11. The Meades were great supporters of the Haiti Mission;
- The repose of the soul of Charlotte Bacon, the mother of Molly Shakeri, who died December 18th, and for the comfort of her loved ones;
- Continuing prayers for: Dr. Dee Tomeo (a friend of Mary Ann Augello Berdoe); Judy Gleason (sister of Sr. Pat Dillon's sister-in-law), Patricia Jones (a dear friend of several RJMs); Denise Schneider (a missionary to Haiti and friend of the RJMs there); Edward Stolba (brother of Sr. Janet Stolba);
- St. Timothy Mission Center (Srs. Doris Bissonnette, Diane Dube, Alice Ouimette, and Jackie Picard) and Dina Mission Center (Srs. Jackie Crepeau and Mary Crepeau) as this week's community for special prayer.



**WE ALSO PRAY FOR ALL THE NEEDS OF  
OUR RJM SISTERS, FAMILY, AND FRIENDS.**

---

**Praised Forever Be Jesus and Mary**