

“God is for us a refuge and strength, a helper close at hand, in time of distress; so we shall not fear though the earth should rock, though the mountains fall into the depths of the sea, even though its waters rage and foam, even though the mountains be shaken by its waves. The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our stronghold”. Psalms 46:1-4

Dear friends, these words of psalms 46 in the year 2015 gave us a lot of courage and hope in this world of terror and unrest we live in. Day by day, we realized that our only refuge, really our only refuge is God. Only he can interpret to us the meaning of life when everything lost its meaning in the world. He alone guided and supported us throughout the year 2015. We received God’s blessings in ways unthought-of as he answered to our prayers.

Our spiritual journey with God was ensured through our collective and individual prayers, recollections, and our annual retreat which took place in August led by Rev. Fr. Isaiah Fru on the topic “Community Life”. Our chaplain Rev. Fr. Henry led the morning devotions during the retreat. This retreat brought together all our sisters; from the Madeleine Home Care and Training Center Akum, those on studies, and those serving as nurses in hospitals and teachers in schools. The novices and postulants during these days took great care of the house. Meanwhile our prioress regularly held short retreats and conducted counseling to further and deepen the vocation of the sisters.

Spiritual and evangelistic trips were carried in Bafut and beyond. Some of our sisters gave vocational talks to the youths, following the youth leadership courses that were held in PSS Bafut and Mankon respectively last August 2015. These took some of our sisters to Benakuma in Menchum Division and Vekovi in Bui Division. These sisters spent a week-end and had the chance to share /encourage the Christians in their life and service to the Lord. The Christians here/their pastors were very welcoming and so pleased to have the sisters celebrate with them.

Another organized meeting in Bafut was the MariaPolis ; a come together of Christians from different denominations to deepen the spirit of unity, share experiences and common concerns which drew many people of which some of our community members took part for five days. This meeting called for our concern since it touches very much our spirituality.

At the beginning of the year more than half of the community traveled down to Buea for the induction of our new church leaders; Rt. Rev. Fonki Samuel Nforba, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon and Rev. Fochang Babila George, Synod Clerk of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. This Solemn occasion drew thousands of Presbyterians as well as Christians from other denominations to Buea. It was a very wonderful ceremony where the out-going moderator Rt. Rev. Festus A. Assana inducted these two servants of God in to the office of moderator and Synod Clerk. The Moderator inducted, Rt. Rev. Fonki Samuel Nforba preached a sermon on the theme “Be Transformed Transformers” drawn from Romans 12:2.

As visitations were concerned, some sisters visited the sick in hospitals, in their homes and the bereaved to pray and encourage them morally and materially.

Last June our Prioress Sr. Shalom attended the Annual Meeting of the Circle of Friends of Sisterhood Emmanuel in Switzerland. This meeting was very important for our community since this Association has for several years been supporting the work of our Sisterhood, our handicap Center in Akum/Agape Program. The president Mr. Urs Scheibler and the board members/all members appreciated her presence and had the joy to share a series of issues with her concerning our Sisterhood and her work.

In July Sr. Shalom and Sr. Ruth took part in the commemoration of 100 years of Brother Roger of Taize, who died 16 years ago and 70 years since his arrival in Taize. The two sisters who were duely invited by

the Taize community went in the company of our Prioress General from France mother Mireille and two other sisters. The meeting which held on the theme “what had brother Roger himself added to the great tree of monastic life” reflected on the activities and contribution of our late brother. The occasion also gave our representatives the opportunity to talk on monastic life in Africa in the context of the Religious Orders notably among Catholics, Anglicans, Orthodox and Protestant churches. At the end of this meeting sr. Ruth returned to Cameroon while Sr. Shalom proceeded to other meetings and visits in Europe.

Before coming over to this meeting, our prioress had been taking part in the Diakonia Region African – Europe (DREA) Assembly in Bergen, Norway, a meeting that gathered 140 people from Africa and Europe to reflect on the theme, “The Eye of the Storm”, a theme which reflected on the difficult times we live in.

After attending these two meetings, she visited Rev. Rihm, the Sarepta Sisterhood/Sr. Angelika, and many other good friends of our community in Germany. We regretted the fact that Rev. Gerhard Rihm who has for the past years been our regular yearly guest, and helping to revise the liturgical/prayer books of the Sisterhood could not come last year for health reasons. Sr. Shalom however was fortunate to visit him/his community of St. Michael brotherhood in Germany who supported the printing of these books. The two of them also had the chance of visiting the Sisters of Seilbezts. From Germany they flow to England for the CIR meeting which brought together many religious men and women to share common concerns in religious life/deepening the spirit of ecumenism.

She returned by the beginning of September full with a lot of material from all these meetings to enhance our community.

Sr. Joy and Sr. Judith celebrated their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in consecrated life on November 24<sup>th</sup> 2015. Sr. Joy is spending a Sabbatical time in the Motherhouse. It is a very meaningful and joyful time for her.

The 20<sup>th</sup> December 2015 was the date of the memorial and thanksgiving service of the father of Sr. Angele. This celebration took place in the Presbyterian Church Memfu, in Bui Division. Sr. Angele and two sisters joined her family and the Memfu community for this celebration. The occasion passed successfully.

Concerning the stages in life, we had the privilege and joy to experience changes in all levels from postulancy to consecration. Sr. Mercy entered into the novitiate in March, while Sr. Irene- Glory and Sr. Joanna pronounced Temporary vows in March and May respectively. In the same month of May on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, Sr. Divine and Sr. Florence pronounced their final vows, an occasion that brought church leaders of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon and a multitude of people from different denominations/religion to witness. To crown the year, we received in November two postulants by names Suzan and Gisela. They are doing well and learning/growing in the religious life. Our chaplain Rev. Fru and other sisters are going on with the formation of the young sisters.

On the part of education our two sisters, Sr. Marie Joelle and Marie Pierre who are out for studies are doing well and were with us for Christmas holidays. We celebrated the Christmas together and our annual feast on the 29<sup>th</sup> December.

As concerning health, we experienced some health crises along the year as two of our sisters underwent surgery, Sr. Claire and Sr. Marie Pierre. They are picking up gradually with regular life and regaining their health.

For projects we were blessed to have the solar energy system planted in our Sisterhood. This has ensured a steady and regular supply of energy in most parts of our community for which we are really so thankful to our donors, sr. Angelika being the backbone behind this wonderful venture. Mr. Jörg Habermann and Sebastian Schiffer from Germany did the installation in October 2015.

Our new guest house project is still undergoing construction. Our hopes and prayers are that we get the means of completing it within the year 2015.

In our Madeleine Home Care and Training Center – Akum, two of our girl's by names Ijan Julienne and Nicoline Yutir graduated with certificates in Sewing, Decoration, Cookery, Embroidery, and Craft Work. Ijan's workshop has been opened in Mbengwi where she is self-employed with different craft works and also training other young women with all she learnt from the center while Nicoline has established hers in Akum village. In the center we have different forms of children and girls living with disabilities who are happily receiving training from the sisters and an employed teacher. Some of them go to school and do craft work when they return. For the upkeep of the center, the sisters run a bakery, do mixed farming and have now opened fish ponds to grow fish for home consumption and for the market. The Circle of Friends of our Sisterhood in Switzerland remains of very great support to the center towards the projects and the patronage of some of the girls and children. The center from time to time also receives some donations from people of good will. We remain thankful for these supports and pray for many more.

The Agape Unity Program under the care of Sr. Judith held several meetings in the Sisterhood in preparation for the 2015 Come Together which successful came to pass on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2015 in Ndu Sub-Division. This occasion brought together 300 persons living disabilities and their carers from Ndu, Nkambe, Nwa, Lassin, etc. A multitude of people also turn out to witness and take part in this occasion. The Divisional Officer, the Mayor and other dignitaries from the Donga-Matung Division were also present at the occasion. Sr. Judith together with the community offered gifts of food items, material needs and medicines to these persons with Special needs and this brought them a lot of joy and happiness. These gifts offered were possible, thanks to the financial help received from the Bethesda Sisters in Switzerland.

In the year which has just ended, we received guests from within the country and beyond. Groups from the PCC, the Baptists Church, Eglise Evangelique, Pentecostal churches who came in for their retreats. Other groups came in for Seminars like the In-Service Training Program, the Marriage Encounter etc. From abroad, we received in January some Friends pataining to the Association of the Circle of Friends in Switzerland. Sr. Angelika from Germany came with Mr. Jörg Habermann and Sebastian Schiffer to follow up the photovoltaic solar system to be installed in our community and to also visit us.

During the last year some sisters lost dear and close family members. Amongst these were Sr. Claire who lost her mother in January and Sr. Evangil whose father passed on to eternity in April etc.

Dear brothers and sisters, we thank the almighty God for the grace given to us all to be partakers of the year 2015 and pray the New Year brings us His abundant blessings.

Merry Christmas in arrears and happy New Year 2016.

United in God's love and prayers

Yours Emmanuel Sisters