

## 2023 Juniors' Winter Gathering "The love of Christ overwhelms us." (2 Cor. 5,14)



On January 12, 2023, the Juniors of Regina Pacis Province paused from their busy routines for a while to come to the winter gathering in the Incheon provincial house.

First, through *Lectio Divina* and taking time to look back on the year, we reflected on what God has been saying to us and how we have grown in God. Then we traveled to Gwangju, Suncheon, Gurye, and Damyang for 3 days. We arrived at the first place, Gwangju, after a four-hour drive from Incheon to see the May 18 Democratization Movement Archives. Before these historic scenes of the struggles for our country's democratization which are preserved in the valuable records registered in UNESCO, we all could not help being overwhelmed and filled with a sense of solemnity. Our Migrants' Center in Suncheon was our second-day destination where we attended the English Mass with the migrants from several countries, including the Philippines and Vietnam. Understanding the difficulties of being away from one's homeland through our own experiences during our international formation period in the Philippines, we could resonate well with them. On the last day of our trip, the pastor of Gurye Parish Church celebrated a Mass, and Bishop Choi graciously shared some time with us in Damyang, who and prayed for us Juniors that we become earthen jars to be used by God. We came back to the provincial house with full hearts through our encounters with the Pastor, who like a shepherd, works with compassion for his flock while enduring the sufferings of these times, as well as the Bishop who sees the Church and the world from a broad and deep perspective.

In the second major part of the gathering, Sr. Maria Hwan-Hee guided us through the Future Leadership Workshop in which she had participated. It was an opportunity for us to question ourselves as to how to face and live in this age as a religious. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we shared our reflections and closed the workshop with the creation of the Juniors' Statement: "You go to people and reach out your hands to them first!"

After the workshop, we had an online meeting with Sr. Mary Ann, who so graciously greeted us with a big smile and gave each one of us her full attention, despite having just returned from her visit to the African Delegation. She reminded us that we can enrich the Juniorate even more deeply through the Bible and our Constitutions. We sang to her the song, 'In Moments Like This' as our small expression of thankfulness.

Sr. Marie Julia, the provincial superior, emphasized the importance of the Word of the Lord too when she spent some time with us. It was a grateful moment that made us feel His Presence and His Word was indeed the center of our gathering the whole time.

During our gathering, we also did small services for the provincial house community.

With the mutual prayerful support we received, and our gratitude for being together during these various programs, we will be helped to overcome challenges as we return to our places of life and ministry. We will live every day as Sisters of Notre Dame with a wide-open mind to the Holy Spirit so that the Love of Christ overwhelms us.