

Brief History of the Zetaman Sisters of the Little Flower

In 1986, Taunggyi Diocese celebrated the 25th anniversary of its erection by Pope John XXIII in 1961 under the leadership of Msgr. Gobbato, PIME. The Diocese had grown to such an extent that a new Diocese of Loikaw was established in 1989. In 1987, Msgr. Matthias U Shwe, Fr. Sotero Phamo, parish priest of Loikaw (later Bishop of Loikaw), and several Catholic Action leaders including U G. Shwe Aung, U A. Shwe Aung, U A. Alfred, U Francis Nire, U Francis Niri and U Peter Kodoi got together to discuss ways and means of a more effective method and approach of evangelization among the vast masses of non-Catholics. It seemed to them that the traditional way was not so effective any more. They thought of forming an elite group of youth that would work among the people especially through the service of health care and education. Fr. Sotero Phamo named the group "Zetaman." The group unanimously adopted that name, and defined its meaning as youth volunteers who are generous enough and have the readiness to serve the Lord and His people.

Twelve youth (eleven girls and one boy) turned up for the first batch of training which lasted three months. They were sent to non-Catholic villages to teach in the village schools and care for the sick. Since then the course was opened every year in Loikaw and then in Pekhoh. When Loikaw Diocese was established in 1989, both of the Dioceses continued with the program. It was meant as a lay movement for evangelization and human development of the peoples.

In 1995, eight years after the foundation of the lay Zetaman movement when its number reached about (180) and they were working in various villages in the two Dioceses, seven girls approached Bishop Matthias U Shwe of Taunggyi Diocese expressing their desire to devote themselves to the service of the evangelization for life, but not as secular persons but as religious. They were accepted as Aspirants on May (20), 1995 and they took formation in Moby Zetaman Formation Center under the care of Fr. Aniceto Dereh, the director of Zetaman, with Sr. Christine Shwe (Sisters of Charity) and Sr. Justina Mu Htai (Sisters of Reparation) helping the initial formation. On June (10), 1997 they were sent to the Philippines for further formation. First they were at Emmaus Village under the direction of Fr. Pierino Rogliardi; they attended a Religious Formation course at Don Carlo Cabina School for one year. Then after the Religious Formation study in 1998 with the help and permission of Archbishop Aniceto Paciano and under Supervision of Msgr. Jesus Felicito (Fr. Sison) they were sent to Pampanga, San Fernando Archdiocese to get formation under the Dominican Sisters of Remedies at Apalit. Sr. Zynaida Nacpil, O.P was Superior General at that time. The girls were received as Postulants in June (10),

1998 in the formation house of the Dominican Sisters and Sr. Carolina Dizon, O.P was given the charge of their formation. They were under the care of the Dominican Sisters at Apalit for one year and returned to Myanmar in June (11), 1999. The Dominican Sisters were willing to give the Novice Formation as well; they accompanied them to Taunggyi, Myanmar. But at that time, because foreigners were not allowed to stay in Myanmar more than one month, they could not continue. They went back to the Philippines leaving the postulants without a Mistress. Bishop Matthias U Shwe with the help of his priests continued giving formation to them in Taunggyi. Later, the formation program was conducted in Moby Zetaman Centre.

On the 3rd of October, 1999, the eleven Zetamans received habits as Novices in Zetaman Center, Moby and continued their Religious formation under the care of Fr. Angelo Tin who was the director of Zetaman at that time. In the meantime ten Zetamans were received as Postulants by Fr. Basilio Ban the director and they were initiated into the formation course in Taunggyi. In 2000 (Jubilee year) on October 1st, the seven Novices (pioneer group) made their first Profession of Vows. The Novices were guided by Sr. Anne Mary Ma Hla and Sr. Sarah (Sisters of Reparation) from 3rd October 1999 - April 2002. After their First Profession, Sr. Bibiana Bya (the first group) accompanied Sr. Anne Mary and Sr. Sarah in the formation for one year (that is, in 2000-2001). When the Sisters of Reparation went back to their Congregation, the Archbishop (founder) acted as Director General and gave charge to Sr. Bibiana Bya to guide the Novices as a Mistress. From that time on, they have had their own Mistresses and Sr. Natalie Su was elected as acting Superior General (not yet Final Profession) from September (24), 2002 to September (29), 2005. Sr. Bibiana was elected acting Superior General on September 29, 2005; at the same time they took their Final Vows as the first group in October 5, 2005. Sr. Bibiana then became the first Superior General. They increased in number and spread themselves in Taunggyi Archdiocese, Pehon Diocese and Yangon Archdiocese.

In 2019, they had seventeen communities: (6) communities in Taunggyi Archdiocese and (10) communities in Pehon Diocese and (1) community in Yangon Archdiocese.

General Chapter

- 1) In 2009 (May 10-18), they held the **First General Chapter** in the newly completed Mother house in Moby. They chose **their Chapter Theme** as **From Koinonia to Effective Mission 'ad gentes'**. There, they studied and commented on the draft Constitutions and planned for the future mission. They also agreed to keep May 20 as the day of founding. Sr. Bibiana Bya acted as Superior General.

- 2) In 2012 (May 15-19), they held their Second General Chapter in Mother House, Moby and chose the Theme as **Evaluation and Planning of ZSLF**. They met for an evaluation of their Vision/Mission Statement, their life, vocation recruitment, planning for self-reliance and their future mission. At the same time on the 15th, they elected Sr. Irene Htoo as Superior General.
- 3) In 2015 (May 11-17), they held their **Third General Chapter** in Mother House, Moby. **The Chapter Theme is Mission '*ad gentes and inter gentes*'**. They reviewed their life, mission and service in the Church and saw whether the Congregation lived up to its charism and Constitution. The draft Constitutions and the Directory were reviewed and revised during the Chapter. On the last day of the General Chapter, they elected Sr. Bibiana Bya as Superior General.
- 4) In 2018 (May 9-18), they celebrated the **Fourth General Chapter** and its **Theme is 'Witnessing of Peace and Love in Pastoral Collaboration'**. They focused their pastoral programs how they collaborated with the clergy, other Religious and laypeople in their evangelizing mission. They realized that the most important of all is humble, joyful collaboration among us in the individual communities. Only then they can bring peace, love and joy to all. They also reviewed and revised their Constitutions and Directory. On the last day of the General Chapter, they elected Sr. Josephine Khay as Superior General.

The Sisters heard the call of God to follow in the footsteps of St. Therese of the Little Flower, their Patroness, will contribute to a certain degree to the sanctification of their own selves and to the evangelization and integral human development of the peoples in Pekhon, Taunggyi and Yangon Dioceses and elsewhere where the Lord calls them to serve.

LOGO



1. Rose represents St. Therese, the Little Flower.
2. Bible represents evangelization.
3. Cross represents hidden sacrifices and sufferings.
4. Candle represents integral human development.
5. Heart represents love (for God, neighbor and creation).
6. Eucharist represents Eucharistic spirituality.
7. Rosary represents Marian spirituality

CHARISM

To make Jesus known and loved through humble services and hidden sacrifices for the spiritual and temporal well being of the people.

VISION

The Zetaman Sisters of the Little Flower is an integrally developed and mature religious congregation, witnessing the Good News with love and zeal.

MISSION

1. To live the spirit of St. Therese in the mission;
2. To promote “communion (*Koinonia*)” in the community and missionary spirituality “launch out into the deep (*Duc in altum*)” by immersing themselves among the people through dialogue and inculturation in order to discern the reality of life and do effective mission of evangelization;
3. To witness the Good News to the people through social and pastoral work;
4. To collaborate with clergy, other religious and lay people in the mission *ad gentes* and *inter gentes*.

Different Stages of Formation Program



Aspirancy {(6 months to (3) years)}



Postulancy {(1 year to (2) years)}



Novitiate (2) years



Temporary Professed Sister {(5) years to (8) years}



Perpetual Professed Sisters



The Zetaman Sisters of the Little Flowers