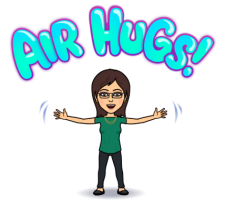


OUR WAY OF LIVING: COMMUNIO



WEI NA PASIN BILONG YUMI LONG STAP. KOMINIO.

2021

10th Anniversary of the Establishment of ISMAPNG

May

In this month's theme, 'Our Way of Living: Communio', I was tasked with hearing from younger voices in our Institute. So I began to think about some of the real bonuses of Institute life so far. I realised that as someone born into a majority culture, I have very much appreciated and been enriched by our intercultural living. So here Duyen reflects on what it means to be Sisters across many cultures. I also found that I have been blessed in our shared Papua New Guinean and Australian Mercy culture. While I may bring to our family table a way of life that is very planned, I have experienced how hard it is to be able to respond to uncertainty. In this COVID world, Philomena reflects on 'strength in the face of change' as a Papua New Guinean skill that enhances the resilience of our table as a whole. Finally, as someone who uses technology, but is often rather slow on the uptake, I acknowledge that some Sisters have been very proactive in using it for the good, especially to enhance communion. So here

Emma shares in a visual way how she builds and nurtures relationships through social media. I am sure you will love her 'bitmojis' that are dotted throughout this document. A bitmoji is a personal 'emoji' - a graphic digital image used to share an emotion.

Even in creating this document I have learned a lot. I would like to thank Theresia Tina RSM for translating the titles and questions into Tok Pisin, and hope to grow in celebration and inclusivity of difference. Enjoy!

Elizabeth Young RSM



THIS MONTH...

Intercultural living

Strength in the face of change

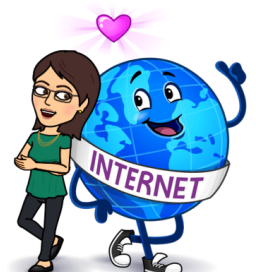
Techno-communio



Under 65 Gathering in Goroka, PNG

Living in Communio
Stap insait long Kominio
Duyen Nguyen RSM
Community South A, SA

I have been asked to write a 500-word reflection for our 10th anniversary, sharing something on our communion of cultures. It is much easier for me to write a 5000 word essay than to put my ten years of living experience into 500 words.



ISMAPNG was formed by a union of fourteen former congregations of Sisters of Mercy in Australia and the autonomous region of Papua New Guinea with rich diversity of backgrounds, cultures and ages. Each group came in with its own foundation story, local culture, sub-culture and heritage. The Sisters come from different countries of origin, predominantly European Australians, and the other minority ethnic groups include those from Papua New Guinea, Vietnam, Malaysia and Pakistan, just to name a few.

There is no, and never will be, 'one size fits all' culture! How do we maintain our unity in diversity while respecting different cultures and heritage? First of all "The tender mercy of our God has given us one another" - Catherine McAuley - (Constitution 2.01).

Communion is about connecting and relationship. True communion originates in our Triune God - three in one, the same and yet different. We are the same and yet different. Communication helps us to learn and to connect with one another across our vast distances. That is how I get to know and keep in touch with our Sisters in PNG and in other states, as well as our Under-60s Mercies across the world.

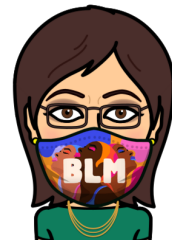
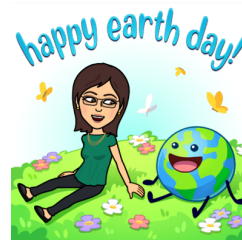
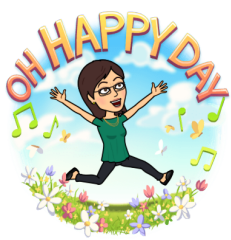
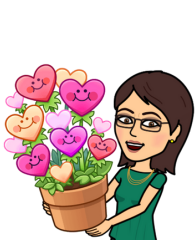


Trinity icon by Andrei Rublev

Trinitarian language is inclusive right from the beginning of creation: "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness" (Gen 1:26). Taking the Trinitarian model, I quickly learned to be part of ISMAPNG by changing the third person (they/them/their) to first person plural pronouns (we/us/our) to own my membership and responsibility. Our words reflect our thinking and our thinking patterns become our values. Indeed, one will never connect if our language remains exclusive.

Sometimes we just take things for granted, and say what we do not really mean. This reminds me of a Vietnamese saying: "Bend your tongue seven times before speaking". Why don't we think of more inclusive language like "Happy Lunar New Year" instead of "Happy Chinese New Year" to our Malaysian or Vietnamese Sisters? Also, it is very different from saying "the PNG Sisters" and "our Sisters in PNG".

As our number decreases, our ratio of diversity and multiculturalism will become greater. We are called to live beyond multi-cultural or cross-cultural towards a more inter-culturalism.



One can adapt and change one's culture but one cannot change one's identity. Likewise, ISMAPNG can become richer in embracing different cultures without losing its identity. Our identity is Mercy. We all have a common origin of following Catherine McAuley in seeking to advance the reign of God by engaging in the spiritual and corporal works of mercy (J2.10).

Memory is a part of our history. We can't control our memory or change our history, but we can learn from our memory and history and make it anew, and even can create a new history. We have all contributed to this new history in our 10 years of ISMAPNG. Hooray!



Reflection Question:

Stap hap bilong 'International Institute' i gat kainkain kalsa, em i helpim mi olsem wanem?

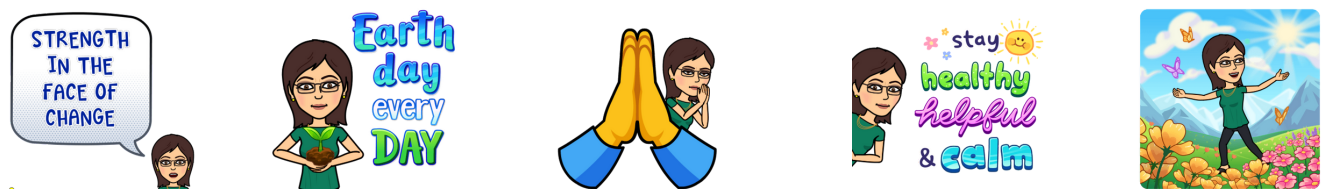
How have I been enriched by being part of an international Institute made up of various cultures?

Strength in the Face of Change: A Papua New Guinean Talent Strong long Taim bilong Senis. Em Wei bilong Papua New Guinea. Philomena Waira RSM, Community North PNG

I reflect on the question: how you find strength to endure and adapt when life brings unexpected changes or events to your culture.

Here in Papua New Guinea we come from diverse cultures, languages, customs and beliefs. It also determines our personalities and behaviours that tell others of which part of PNG we come from; such as Highlands, New Guinea Islands, Southern Regions and Mombasa.

During this time of COVID-19, I see our people have adapted new things in their lives with unexpected changes or events. Such as wearing of face mask, washing of hands after touching an object and social distancing. It also made many people get scared to move around in public places such as town, market, and to travel to other towns and cities.



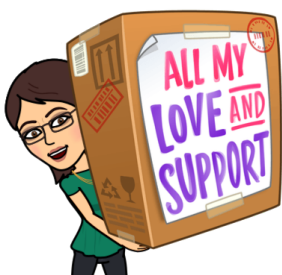
When the government announced that everyone has to wear a face mask, we all felt uncomfortable, because masks were only seen worn by nurses and doctors in the hospitals. However the health personnel had to give awareness to the people to accept the new changes in our societies. I see that we have to change with the signs of the times and see what is beyond.

As I reflect on how I cope with my difficulties, I think of my life in the Mercy Community. I have come from a diverse cultural back ground to live in a Mercy Community; it was difficult in the beginning.

When I live in the Mercy Community, I learnt that it has its own culture. So I learnt to adapt to the Religious culture and other Sisters culture in the Mercy community. As I became Religious, I said no to bringing some of my cultural beliefs and traditions into the congregation. Because they would only create a conflict with other Sisters in the congregation, who also have their own cultural beliefs and traditions. For example in food preparation, we all have our own way of cooking with different varieties of foods. We speak different languages, and to avoid conflicts in the community I have to speak common languages such as English and Tok-Pisin.

Sometimes it depends on the person or individual who is ready to let go of some culture and adapt to other people's culture and traditions.

To me, it depends on my family background, the way I was brought up in the family. It helps me to be a better person and be ready to accept the new changes and cope with difficulties in life.



Reflection Question:

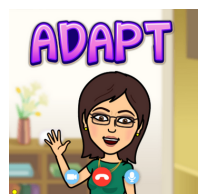
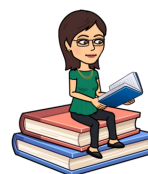
Wanem ol sampela wei mi konekt wantaim ol arapela sista?

In what ways do I connect with other Sisters through various means?

Reflection Question:

Long wanem hap mi painim strong long stap wantaim long ol senis bilong laip?

From where do I find strength to adapt in the face of life changes?



All the bitmojis found in this document were created by Emma Llewellyn RSM.

