

Sr. Ellen Kelly's Visit to East Asia Province

The Sisters and the Lay Mission Partners of Thailand and Myanmar have been blessed with the visit of Sr. Ellen Kelly from 21st August to 1st September 2016. On this her first visit to East Asia Province, Sr. Ellen spent a couple of days in Thailand and 8 days in Myanmar.

Thailand 21 – 23 August

Sr. Regina Htoo Htoo and Sr. Jiemjit welcomed Sr. Ellen Kelly at the Suvarnabhumi Airport on 21st August. The Sisters then proceeded to Good Shepherd Community in Bangkok where Sr. Ellen was warmly welcomed by the Sisters, staff and the Good Shepherd family.

Sr. Ellen visited the different Good Shepherd ministries in Bangkok and appreciated the good work being done there. After lunch with the community, the Sisters continued the journey to the Provincialate of East Asia in Pattaya. A brief visit was made to Good Shepherd Fountain of Life Children Center and Women's Center.



Myanmar 23 August – 1 September

Yangon

With joy and gratitude, Myanmar Sisters and Good Shepherd family warmly received Sr. Ellen on 23 August night in Yangon. Upon arrival, a short welcoming ceremony including the overview of the Country, Good Shepherd history and current ministries was presented.



Kachin State

Early the next morning, Sr. Ellen accompanied by Srs. Regina Htoo Htoo and Veronica left for Kachin State, the northern most State of the country, which is affected by ongoing civil wars, Jade mines crisis, drug addictions and human trafficking. There are two Good Shepherd Communities (Hopin and Mohnyin) in this area. The local people and the Church members welcomed Sister with the Kachin ritual dressed in traditional costumes. One of the most active groups that the Sisters are working with is the College Students who are at risk of drug abuse and human trafficking. The group presented a cultural show as a symbol of their love and gratitude. Sr. Ellen set aside quality time for open dialogue with the Sisters in community and showed interest in each Sister.



Mandalay Division

After having spent 3 days in Kachin State, Sr. Ellen came down to Mandalay where the two Good Shepherd houses are located. The Good Shepherd family in a newly opened Vocational Training Center and the Shelter for women and girls presented a cultural show. Sr. Ellen was particularly impressed by the ministry of Juvenile Justice that the Sisters are initiating and assured her support for this much needed ministry with the child prisoners.



On August 28, Sr. Ellen visited Pyin-Oo-Lwin Community which is recently founded in order to establish a Spiritual Renewal and Retreat Center for both the Sisters and the women and girls. After having listened to the Sisters, and the future plan and the challenges, Sr. Ellen encouraged the Sisters to begin with what is available, while at the same time working towards the realization of the plan.

Bago Division

The next visit was to a village community where the Sisters are mainly involved in Education, Healthcare and Community Development. About 200 children welcomed Sr. Ellen with short entertainment. It was a half day visit but Sr. Ellen spent most of the time listening to the Sisters in open dialogue and appreciating what they have been doing for 40 years in this challenging situation.



Back to Yangon

On 31st August, all Myanmar Sisters gathered in Yangon to have a day's meeting with Sr. Ellen. Reflection and sharing of the day was focused on the Congregational Direction Statement 2015. It was a moment of heart to heart dialogue with the Congregational Leader in an atmosphere of Sacred Space.

The Sisters were touched by her example and the friendship model of leadership. Her simplicity, humility, inclusiveness and respect for the culture and values of others are so inspiring.



As a conclusion of the visit of Sr. Ellen, a family night was organized.



Each one of us felt deep joy and gratitude for the gift of Sr Ellen and asked our Shepherd God to bless and guide her as she leads the Congregation during this challenging time.