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Sr. Nguyen Thi Son and others attend the Lunar New Year 2025 celebration with the Lovers of the Holy Cross sisters at the motherhouse in Hanoi. (Courtesy of LHC sisters)



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The motto for the Sisters of the Lovers of the Holy Cross is: "Jesus Christ Crucified, the one object of our minds and hearts; we adore You, we glorify You, because by Your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world."

According to our constitution, we sisters are called to recite this prayer of exaltation anytime and anywhere "in common and private upon entering and leaving the chapel or church, when looking upon the cross, or whenever thinking of God."

As a sister of the Congregation of the Lovers of the Holy Cross, I know that Jesus Christ's salvation of the whole world did not end at his death on the Cross but continues until the last day. Thus, the Lovers of the Holy Cross sisters — and all Christians — have a responsibility to become the extended hands, hearts, minds, mouth and feet of Jesus to continue His salvific mission.

Our founder, Bishop Lambert de la Motte, encouraged us "to live the spirit of mediation, in imitation of the Savior … [The Sisters of] The Lovers of the Holy Cross are to bear the compassionate heart and become the visible hands of Christ crucified … To share the suffering of her people and to comfort them, especially women and youth."

Therefore, we are called to walk side by side with people in their struggles with material poverty, family difficulties or the loneliness of youth. Aware that women and youth often carry hidden burdens, our founder encouraged the sisters to stand with them, listen to their struggles, and bring encouragement and hope. In our ministry today, we care not only for youth and women but for all the poor, marginalized and weak. The sisters' mission is to exalt the dignity of the vulnerable in society and in the church.

The sisters' celebration of the Lunar New Year (Tết) at the motherhouse in Hanoi is another example of exalting human dignity. Instead of going out to find the poor and distribute small gifts, the sisters open their doors and invite the less fortunate to share meals, receive traditional gifts such as food and lucky money, pray together, and be heard. For the poor, this is not just material support, but a powerful sign that they are valued, loved and treated as human beings.

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The mission of the Lovers of the Holy Cross is to lift up all God's children, especially girls and women. From the beginning, our founder intended the congregation to have the "duty to teach both Catholic and non-Catholic girls everything they should know." Maintaining this legacy, the current LHC Constitution calls for "advancing the life of women through vocation training, educating the role of women in the family and in society, and forming their conscience."

The sisters respond by organizing courses that promote the development of young girls in parishes. In a secularized society, girls face new challenges to their faith and morals, often leading to loneliness and psychological disorders. Recognizing this reality, the sisters have established summer courses to help girls discover the value of life. These programs provide an opportunity to share openly what they may hesitate to share with their parents. In these courses, the girls' voices are heard and they flourish in an environment of faith and humanity. They also learn defense skills in order to protect themselves from sexual abuse.

Through the mission, the sisters train and guide young Vietnamese girls toward a moral and faithful life. In doing so, the sisters cooperate with God's salvific plan, helping to shape faith and future for Vietnamese young girls, their family, the church and society.

The feast of the Exaltation of the Cross is a great solemnity for the congregation. For us, the cross is not a symbol of defeat, but an opportunity to praise, hope and love. Through the death of Jesus on the Cross, God exalts his people and draws them closer, as Jesus says in John 12:32: "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself."

His death also unites his children in service of others, especially the poor and marginalized when we live out his teaching to love God and neighbor. When the sisters embrace this mission, the cross is no longer just a memory of Christ's suffering and death — it becomes the present power of God's love.

The new life brought by exalting the cross is evident in the smiles of the poor at the Lunar New Year celebration in our motherhouse, in the confidence of a girl who has discovered her worth, and in the joy of those who now understand the value of life,

morality, and their Catholic faith. Their new understanding leads them to respect others and love their parents, even when their parents are strict.

The feast of the Exaltation of the Cross is also a feast of the exaltation of God's people. By lifting up the lowly, comforting those who suffer and empowering women and youth, the Lovers of the Holy Cross sisters make the Cross shine as a sign of hope for all.

I dream that our mission will enter a new chapter, one rooted ever more deeply in the Cross of Christ and expressed in more direct participation in the struggle for social justice and gender equality in Vietnam. In this way, we will be able to live our mission of exalting the Cross more deeply.