# MSCS presence in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

# The Asia Delegation of the MSCS sent off its first two missionaries to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, namely, *Sister Teresa Mercado and Sister Eufrocina Sumampong*, on August 3, 2018, two days before the official opening of the first MSCS community in the country on August 6, date when the two Sisters will be received by the host institution and will have settled in their residence.

# *This is the work of Divine Providence all along, to broaden the MSCS base of opportunities for vocations and mission in Asia.*

**Context:**

Ho Chi Minh City, commonly known as Saigon, is a city in southern Vietnam. It is recognized for the crucial role it played in the Vietnam War. In the time following the end of the Vietnam War, the Vietnamese migration involved refugees and other humanitarian migrants largely taken in by Western and neighboring Southeast Asian countries, and included as well, student and labor migrant flows headed to Vietnam's communist allies. Despite the fact that war and conflict pushed the majority of Vietnamese migration in the second half of the 20th century, Vietnam’s fast economic growth has motored migration to and from the country. Today, as Vietnam’s cities rapidly modernize, the number of migrants pouring into the country is astonishing. Estimates have it that in Ho Chi Minh City, the number of migrants is nearly 30 percent of its population.

Incidentally, Vietnam has the fifth largest Catholic population in Asia, after the Philippines, India, China and Indonesia. After the political opening of the country at the end of the 1980s, a great number of religious congregations of European origin arrived in Vietnam to find communities. This took place, especially, in Ho Chi Minh City (south) and at Vinh (north), which are the two dioceses which have the largest Catholic population. Many young Vietnamese from large Catholic families enthusiastically embrace religious life, particularly attracted to apostolic congregations and to a lesser extent to institutes of contemplative life.

**MSCS Presence:**

The Sisters, upon arrival in Ho Chi Minh City late night on August 3, were welcomed by the two staff of the Center for Language Studies, operated and owned by Mr. Thoi Nguyen. One of the staff happened to be a Filipina and this facilitated a lot for the Sisters. The next day, they were given orientation at the Center and were helped to familiarize themselves with their new environment.

Early on the 6th of August, the Sisters were received in the office of Mr. Thoi and this officially opened the MSCS itinerant community and mission in Ho Chi Minh City, in what we call the *Itinerant Scalabrini Project.*

The *Itinerant Scalabrini Project* intends to be a 2 year period of study of the Vietnamese people, language and culture, in view of establishing a solid foundation for the eventual foundation of a MSCS community that will serve both pastoral mission and care for vocations. To achieve this, the Sisters become migrants among the migrants, sustained by the stipend they will earn from the Center for Language Studies.

Apostolate and Mission Expansion

MSCS Asia Delegation