

Writing meditations for pope, nun gives voice to abused children

VATICAN CITY - The cloistered Augustine nun who has written the meditations for Pope Benedict XVI's Way of the Cross service said she strived for simplicity to give a voice to children who have been abused in the church and beyond.

Mother Maria Rita Piccione, president of the Italian Federation of Augustinian Nuns, told Vatican Radio that she wanted "to give space in this prayer of the church to the voice of children and teens, who sometimes are offended, injured and exploited. Here I am referring not just to the cases of abuse that have been talked about so much, because the problem is much vaster and regards all humanity."

Pope Benedict chose the Augustinian to write the meditations that will be read Good Friday, April 22, as he leads the Stations of the Cross at Rome's Colosseum.

Mother Piccione told Vatican Radio April 5 that she tried to reflect on each station of Jesus' passion from the point of view "not only of believers, but of every person. My gaze, my listening stopped at this level: the level of the human heart ... because it is like a laboratory where the fate of what happens on a global scale is decided."

She said she hoped that through her meditations, the hearts of all who listen will be touched and they will recognize not only their responsibility for their sins, but how much God offers each person through Jesus.

In a separate interview with L'Osservatore Romano, the Vatican newspaper, she said that while she was writing the meditations, she kept looking at a wooden owl she keeps on her desk.

"Looking at that owl, thinking about its ability to see in the dark, I found what I hope is the right key for the meditations I am proposing. If it represents the night, then it is necessary to seek the face of God who enlightens even the thickest darkness," she said.