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GENERAL COUNCIL

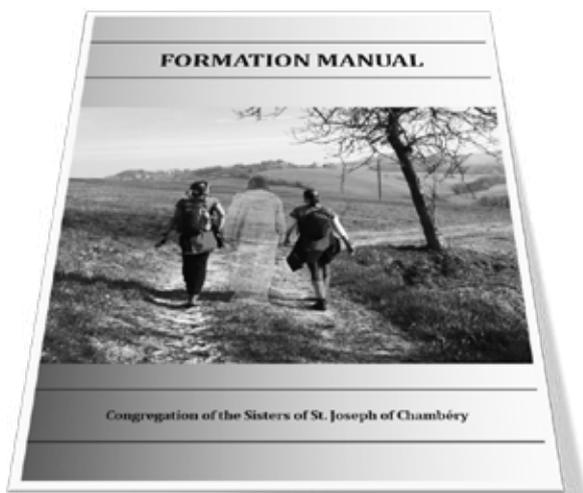
Living and transmitting the beauty of consecrated life

Publication of the new Formation Manual

S. Mariaelena Aceti

General Council

“The consecrated life is beautiful. It is one of the most precious treasures of the Church. It is beautiful, then, to be its formators. It’s a privilege.” These are the words of Pope Francis to the formators gathered in Rome in April, 2015, for the year dedicated to consecrated life. On that occasion, the Pope recalled that formation is the exciting possibility of “participating in the work of the Father who forms the heart of the Son in those whom the Spirit has called”. This fascinating Trinitarian action forms the background for the new



Formation Manual of the Congregation which will be published in the coming days.

The elaboration of the document began with the International Formation Session of 2019 and takes up its challenges and inspiration. It is the result of various collaborations and this has contributed to a wider and more global vision. An editorial commission gave it

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shape during the session. This draft was then entrusted to the session's coordination group, also international, which worked to develop its contents for over a year. Finally, the text was examined by the General Council, which refined the language with an intercultural perspective.

From this intense work has taken shape a full-bodied document which, as the formators requested, aims to offer not only the vision of the formation project of the congregation, but also to become a useful tool in the hands of the various formation agents. It is a "manual", precisely, to be consulted whenever a choice regarding formation is at stake or when specific problems arise.

Compared to the previous Guidelines of 2002, the new manual abandons any reference to the stages of formation, focusing instead on formation as a process of conversion and

transformation that goes towards the full realization of the person in Christ. There are no goals to be reached to move on to the next stage, but rather a continuous development that begins with the encounter with Jesus and lasts a lifetime. Therefore, in vocational discernment, it is fundamental that the person "have the profound experience of feeling that she is God's beloved daughter. The missionary response will be a living expression of this intense love".

The manual warns formators against "offering pre-packaged answers" and rather indicates the secret of getting involved in the questions of the younger generations. "This attitude of openness allows the young people to express themselves and give their contribution to the community." The pedagogy of accompaniment is that of Emmaus, while the recommended mindset is the loving

and revelatory attitude of Jesus in the washing of the feet.

The document emphasizes that "a responsible, free and mature response to God's call requires the personal work of integration." This implies a radical change in the way of considering formation: the person in formation is the one principally responsible for her formation journey; all the other agents of formation, such as formators, leaders and all the sisters of the community are no more than support.

The project of the manual is ambitious: to aim at the formation of witnesses, women capable of "throwing themselves into the arms of life and listening to God's heart without running away and without idealizing", women ready to give life in the ordinary and to offer it freely in the extraordinary, in continuous reference to Jesus and in a culture of continuous formation.

Standing in Hope

S. Sally M. Hodgdon

General Council

During these 4 months of the Global Covid-19 Pandemic, along with you, I have spent time reflecting on the critical situation throughout the world. I found myself rereading my prayer life to re-experience the source of my hope when the news was so tragic and the feelings of helplessness were so strong.

Italy, especially the Northern part, was decimated in many ways by Covid-19. More than 150 doctors died. The number of deaths each day climbed close to 1,000 and the number of new cases increased exponentially to over 5,000 a day. We watched this happen in Spain and other countries in Europe and in the United States where more than 113,000 people have died. Now we watch the people in Brazil and all of Latin America, India and Pakistan, as well as many African countries, being hit hard



with equally great suffering. Initially, as we watched the TV reports, and prayed with Pope Francis and all Italians each evening, we wondered what we could say to those congregations and dioceses who lost many priests, sisters and brothers and what we would say to the families whose parents, grandparents, spouses and others died alone in hospitals or their apartments? This sense of helplessness really hit hard

when we received the phone call from the sisters in Pinerolo telling us that all 23 sisters in the Motherhouse were ill with Covid-19. We could not go to help them since the borders of each region were closed.

Many of you saw on National News and social media what was one source of comfort and hope in Italy. It was people clapping from their porches for the health care workers; families with

candles lit and Italian flags moving in the breeze as we all sang National Songs from rooftop terraces, patios or open windows; and gifted musicians singing and playing to keep up the spirits of those in lockdown. It was this feeling of community, of being ONE, regardless of the walls and not knowing one another's names. Seeing this happen repeatedly, especially in those first 6 weeks, was an experience of awe and wonder. It reminded me of other times in my life when I experienced similar moments of the wonder of God's Spirit moving in my life...lifting me into spaces of

hope and joy I had not known before. One such moment was when I knew I was called to be a Sister of St. Joseph. That memory and other times of feeling the movement of God and the deep love of family and friends has come back to me strongly during these months. I believe that these moments of wonder and hope, reminders of my own faith and trust in the God that goes before us, and knowing we are not alone, were what fueled my hope, even when I could not offer concrete help. During the weeks of Easter, the daily

readings mirrored what we were actually living globally...people sharing who they are, what they had, reaching out as best they could to those in their "communities", and many giving their lives to care for Covid-19 patients and their families. The Spirit of Pentecost has come to offer us comfort, knowledge, wisdom and faith that this unprecedented journey of a global pandemic is exactly where we are to be present. This is where we are to witness to hope, seeking those moments of wonder, those God moments in a very new but real journey with our global neighbors.

J P I C

Responding to Climate Change

S. Brigit Ekka

Province of Nirmala - India

Saving the environment starts with us and it is our responsibility to act against the terrible threats to preserve the planet for future generation. Everyone knows the importance of nature. It consists of all living beings on earth, which are mutually dependent on each other. But due to the pollution caused by human beings, many species are becoming extinct and the global climate is also changing at a very fast rate. Seeing these problems and conditions, we, the staff and students of St. Thomas School Nongjri, MEGHALAYA (North East, India), have taken these steps to educate others about climate change, by using different platforms that allow us to spread our message easily in the school and hostel, the parish and villages. The theme of this year's annual program was "Save the Environment". This program sent a powerful message to our students, parents and all those who were present. This was done through dance, skit, speech and song. The chief guest insisted and pleaded



in his speech to take care of Mother Earth. He said "When we take care of mother earth, it will take care of us". The following day, each class planted three plants in collaboration with their teachers. Every Friday, we organize "Swatch Bharat". The staff along with the students clean the surroundings of the school and the village streets as well. Focus is placed on plastics, which are harmful to Mother Earth, and the need to ban them.

Those who stay in the hostel clean the entire environment of their hostel and its premises every Saturday. They are encouraged to take care of the environment, plant trees and love nature. After every program in the parish or village there are some volunteers to see to cleaning up the surroundings. And the parish priest has strictly announced that if anyone is caught throwing plastics, or waste, they will be fined Rs.500/-, so each one takes their own responsibility.

Climate Change and Green Living

S. Maria Vaz

Province of Nirmala - India

“Green living is one of the best ways to save the planet and to conserve our natural resources.”

Climate change is one of the defining issues of our time. It is now certain that human beings are changing earth's climate. The atmosphere and oceans have warmed, accompanied by sea level rise, a strong decline in Arctic Sea ice and other climate related changes. The main reasons behind this are human activities which increase carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, deforestation, and the exploitation of natural resources. Given the diverse impacts of climate change, the immediate need to address these adverse impacts is widely recognized.

Responding to climate change involves two possible approaches: mitigation and adaptation. The first, mitigation, works on reducing and stabilizing the levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, while the second, adaptation, seeks way to live with what is happening.

Saving the environment starts with us and it is our responsibility to act against these terrible changes to preserve the planet for future generations. There are several measures we can take to do this including conservation, recycling, use of renewable energy and educating the public about the dangers of climate change.

The beautiful universe which God created is being threatened. The need of the hour is to restore wholeness and harmony to mother earth. For this we strive to make the students



understand the pain of mother earth and make them ecologically sensitive. One effort we make in this regard at Saint Joseph College. Ranjhi, is organising “Eco Friendly Week”. We consider it important to increase awareness about water scarcity and develop a sense of responsibility for personal water usage as well as better understand the plight of people affected by water scarcity. To do this we displayed charts during the morning assembly depicting the importance of rain water harvesting and conservation of water. To carry this out on a practical level, rain water harvesting units have been installed in the school campus to promote both water and energy conservation and at the same time improve the quality and quantity of ground water level. Since plastic causes harm to humans, animals and plants through toxic pollutants, affecting all organisms in the food chain, we understand the importance of understanding this, accomplished in a rally. Students marched carrying placards with messages to refrain from unnecessary usage of plastics. They also chanted slogans regarding plastics and the

disadvantages of their use.

The importance of trees in purifying the air and maintaining the ecological balance is well known. A community service group of the school organized the Tree Plantation as a way to sensitize students towards the need to preserve the environment and ecology. Since cleaning is important for health and safety and it is true that children learn by doing, cleanliness campaigns are organized in the school. Maintaining a clean school environment sets a good example for the students. It encourages learners to take pride in their school, which makes them less likely to drop litter and, hopefully, will lead them to make a greater effort to maintain their environment.

In addition the ‘Annual Athletic Meet’ was organized around the theme “Environment”. Through a mass drill, one of the best ways to showcase the talents of children in India, the students gave a wonderful message of how we can unite to make the earth pollution free, colorful and a better place to live for the future generations.

“Let us pledge to heal our Mother Earth in whose lap we are sheltered. Let us become eco-friendly”.

Smiling with our eyes

S. Rosalia Fávero

Brazil

The pandemic that the world is experiencing brought us many surprises and affected what was most sacred in relationships: the open, frank and welcoming smile that was so good and we didn't even appreciate enough. Today, we are learning to live intensely the gestures, the words, the service, the small delicacies that create communion among us and strengthen us for solidarity and availability to our most vulnerable brothers and sisters. Our smile is hidden behind a protective mask that, unfortunately, we need to wear.

This stance, in our present context, is somewhat uncomfortable, but very important for life to continue its normal cycle. For this reason, we the sisters and associates decided to make masks and distribute them to people, in order to protect themselves and protect the lives of others, while other group activities are not allowed.

We are all united in this joint effort of solidarity and communion with all humanity, affected by COVID 19. In addition to the masks, we encouraged the distribution of baskets of basic foodstuffs. We use the WhatsApp of the families we serve at the Alternative Solidarity Centre to stress preventive measures and to monitor their health situation. As it is not possible to continue developing the Project's activities in the usual way, we decided to modify the Project for the time of the pandemic. Children continue to receive activities to be carried out at home and mothers return the work of their children to the Centre, once a week and receive another



S. Rosalia and associates prepare food for healthcare workers

activity for the following week. The Centre lives on donations. Donors have always been very faithful and now in this situation, their generosity has become even greater. Therefore, we decided to continue preparing 70 meals daily from Monday to Friday. Mothers arrive with their bowls, following the hygiene protocol and we serve them portions.

Another action that we, the sisters and the associates, decided to take on, to mark a solidary presence with the health professionals who are on the front line caring for those affected by Covid 19, is sending some food, once a week, so that they can do their best in the mission they have so seriously assumed. There are many people who ask us to pray and listen to video calls in order to relieve them of fear, anguish, anxiety and worries.

We are learning to value time,

coexistence, a simple life. It seems that this pandemic came to show us that it was necessary to slow down, and to focus on the most essential things in life. We regret that we have to go through this sad experience in order to re-educate ourselves in our relationships and interaction with the environment.

The most painful part of this ordeal is that our Government is not concerned about the life of the dying. They are focused on self-serving and grossly anti-democratic issues, while the people, endowed with a sense of caring, organize and carry out beautiful and heroic gestures of solidarity.

It is becoming very clear to us that the pandemic made us feel that we are all the same and we need to set aside categories. That is why smiling with your eyes and experiencing communion with your heart, implies sensitivity to discover new ways to expand Jesus' proposal, that all be ONE.

Understanding Fake News

S. Laveena D'Souza

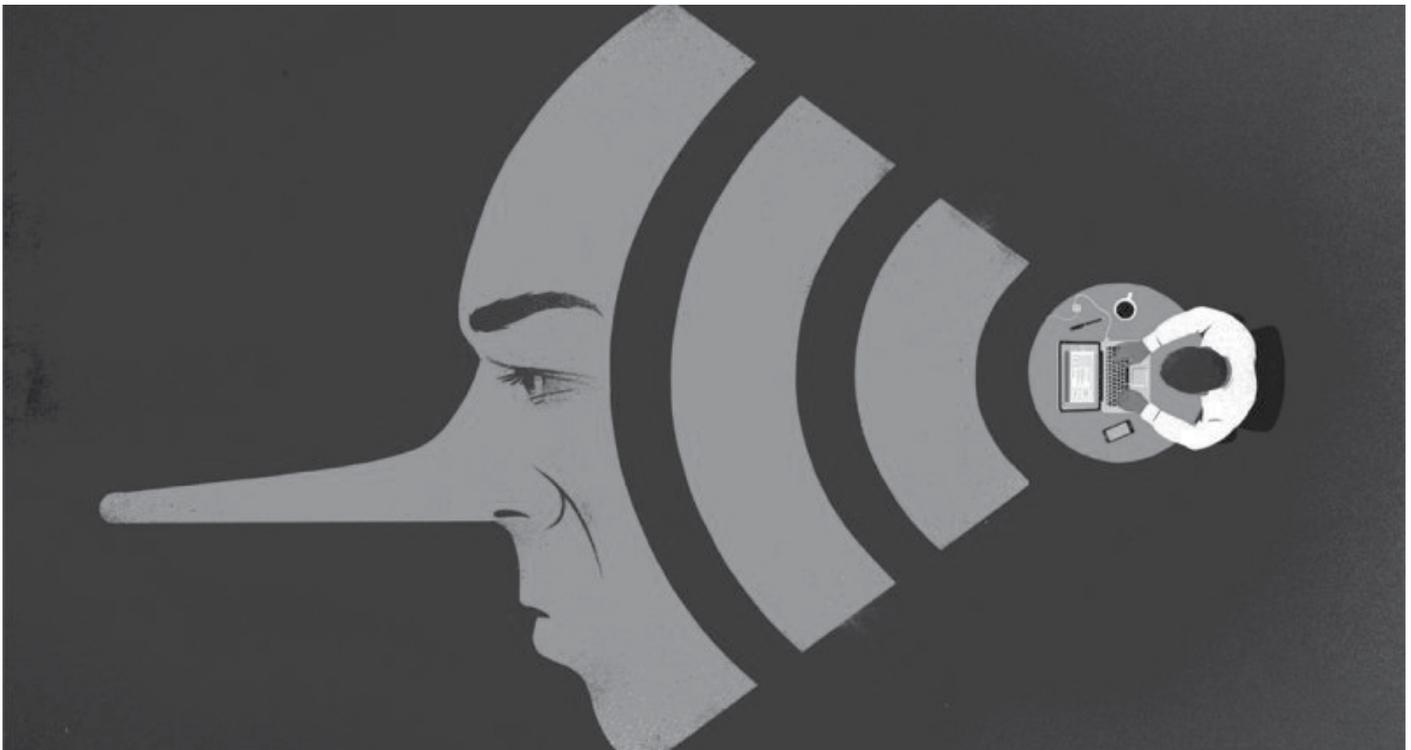
Province of Tanmaya - India

“Russia has unleashed 500 lions on the road to keep people indoors.” This is a message that had been forwarded on WhatsApp. A similar message: “Russian president Vladimir Putin released 800 lions and tigers across Russia to devour anyone who comes out. Stay home or die hard,” was a news item circulated on Twitter. And both, with accompanying pictures, were circulated on Facebook as well. When we see such news what do we do?

to deliberately misinform or deceive readers. According to Time Magazine, fake news or fake news stories, often of a sensational nature, are created to be widely shared online for the purpose of generating advertising revenues via web traffic or discrediting a public figure, political movement, company. Martina Chapman, of Media Literacy Experts once stated, “There are three elements to fake news; mistrust, misinformation and manipulation.”

The manipulation might be by editors or media experts who know that people will pay attention if they edit the news to point to some intense outcome. Fake news propaganda that some news editors use to earn money through its distribution. It can generate a lot of

whole impact of a story and it can change the point of view of a person regarding a situation. Fake news can even lead people to develop hatred against another religion, a political group, celebrities or agencies. It is important to check the source of a story, try to recognize the website and get more information through googling. Read beyond the headlines. Much fake news uses sensational or shocking headlines to grab the attention. Often the headlines of such news stories are in all caps with exclamation marks. Such information may contain incorrect dates or altered timelines. You can always check the original date an article was published. There are also popular online sites they mostly create satire or funny



We read... we believe... we forward. We do not even think about whether it is true or not. This is how we become part of circulating fake news. The Global News Service traced the picture of the lion back to a Daily Mail story from April 2016. The lion in the picture is one taken in South Africa's Johannesburg in 2016 as part of a local film production. It has nothing to do with Russia or the coronavirus pandemic. Many speak about fake news at this time. But what is it really? Fake news is news, a story or a hoax created

revenue for the media company which needs news as early as possible. By leaking it on social sites like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, they receive income because every thousand shares or thousand tweets brings a lot of revenue to them. Basically, it is done to generate revenue.

Fake News can deceive people by looking like trusted websites or using similar names and web addresses to reputable news organizations. In today's world it is challenging because one bit of fake news can change the

stories. Get to know them. There are many reliable fact-checking sites including: www.snopes.com, www.politifact.com, www.factcheck.org, www.bbc.com/news/reality-check, www.channel4.com/news/factcheck, and www.google.com/reverse-image-search

Open any of these sites, place your information / picture in the search engine and you may get some genuine information concerning the news or picture you are looking at. This is just one method of factchecking.

“Sister, do you think we`ll die?”

Remembering the bombing of a school in Denmark

S. Gisela Heitz

Denmark

This year 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the bombing of one of the schools of the sisters in Denmark. We remember the event and the many who died that day. A day during the last months of the Second World War, on March 21st 1945 at 11:15 several bombs fell - by mistake - on a school of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Denmark. The bomber wing came from England; their destination was the headquarters of the German occupiers, which was located close to the school. A chain of unfortunate events led to one of Denmark`s worst catastrophes. It was a tragedy for the Sisters of St. Joseph who had been running this school for girls and a kindergarten since 1924. About 500 persons were in the building, many were saved, but 89 children and 18 adults were killed. 10 among the adults were sisters. This was a day of deep grief and sorrow.

One of the sisters that survived was Sr. Helene Rosenberg (1912-2003). In a book, written by a survivor child, Alice Maud Guldbrandsen, Sr. Helene speaks about the hours after the bomb attack, before she was saved and taken to a hospital.

(The following is a summary, not a quotation, from the book “Tavshed blev min sang/Silence became my song”, released in 2005).

Sr. Helene Rosenberg: I had just finished my lunch, when I heard a terrible noise from an aircraft just above the building.. It was a damaged plane that exploded a few meters away from the school. The whole school shook, and fire and black smoke came out the windows. A few moments later the first bomb from one of the ensuing planes hit the chapel and destroyed one of the staircases that many of the children along with their teachers were using to find their way out. Then the main wing was hit by three bombs. However, along with

the third and fourth graders we reached the basement, when I was hurled forward and found myself and many girls and teachers being buried under the crashing walls. It was dark as the night and it was almost impossible to breathe under the weight of heaps of rubble. I will not forget the suppressed cries of the children ... “Daddy”, “Mom”, “Jesus”, “Mary help us”. Gradually the voices fell silent.

After a while I heard a trembling voice: “Sister, do you think we are going to die?” “Yes!” I whispered. “Yes, I think we are going to die”. “Do you think it will take a long time?” I heard the voice asking. “Maybe” I replied; “Maybe. But I don’t know”.

We were not moving at all ... lying helplessly and waiting, that it soon should be over, surrendering to God`s will with fear in our souls and the Lord`s word in our minds: I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my



S. Helene Rosenberg

distress until it is accomplished! (Luke 12, 50). However, we had peace of mind, and knew that “not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it” (Mt.10, 29). The miracle was happening! Not knowing how ... suddenly help was near ... in a dramatic attempt to pull me up from

where I had been stuck and hemmed in, I came free. A second later a rain of fire sparks and burning beams crashed down where I had been lying ... (p.29-33) Another small miracle happened: a cross from one of the classrooms was found undamaged in the ruins, was saved and brought to the motherhouse. All the sisters that were killed during this attack are buried at the cemetery, where a memorial has been prepared for them. And in 1953 a monument was raised by the city of Copenhagen on the spot where the school was.



The monument to those who died, raised by the city of Copenhagen on the spot of the school

Heart-breaking scenes of Migrant Labourers during the Lockdown

S. Navya Neelamvilail

Province of Pachmarhi - India

“Sataria Hembrom and six other migrant workers walked almost 1,800 km from Mumbai to reach his home in Chaibasa district in Jharkhand, trekking up to 45 km a day and going without food sometimes.” Sanjoy Dey, Hindustan Times, 14 May 2020.

The plight of almost 100 million interstate migrant labourers during the nationwide lockdown that started on March 24 in India due to COVID-19 is shocking and heart-breaking. Hundreds and thousands of them walked across states for many days in an attempt to get back home. Aron Purie, Editor-in-chief, India Today, calls it “one of the biggest displacements of humans on the planet in this century.”

The Indian rail tracks and roads stand as witness to the plight of the migrant labourers during their long arduous journey. They had no money, no food and no water. Some of them fell dead on the way from hunger and thirst. Walking miles and miles the skin of their feet began to tear causing lesions and severe bruises. The children cried aloud unable to walk forward. A train ran over 16 migrants who slept on the track at night and killed them instantly. Women with newborn babies and women due for delivery, all walked miles together. A few of them died in special trains arranged to take migrant labourers home. The central as well as state governments failed to provide food, transport, and shelter to India’s migrant Labourers. They had got only four hours’ notice before the country went into lockdown on the 25th of March. Many Covid-19 affected people in India now are migrant



Migrant labourers returning to the state of Bihar

workers who have returned to their villages from various states. These news reports are only the tip of the iceberg that gives a glimpse of the pathetic situation of migrant labourers in India. The Indian government launched “Vande Bharat” missions to bring back Indians stranded abroad by planes. But it had made no proper arrangements to transport interstate migrants, the backbone of our economy, back home. Government schemes seem to have missed them out because most of these labourers work in the informal sector.

There are millions of migrant workers in India working as labourers at construction sites, as domestic helpers, street vendors and at other daily-wage jobs. “Micro studies conducted by research institutes and NGOs suggest that around 80 million short-term migrants are working in India, including: 40 million in the construction industry, 20 million domestic workers, 7 million sex workers and around 12 million

who work in illegal mines.” According to one estimate, the migrant workers contribute 10% of the national GDP. The lifeline of cities is kept alive by the sweat and blood of these migrant labourers.

The plight of the migrant workers poses many tough questions for us to reflect upon. We may be connected with some of these men and women in our work or through our institutions. Do we know them and their home situation and why these have left their near and dear ones to live often in pathetic conditions for their meagre income? Does our heart resonate with theirs as we take time out to understand their home and living conditions?

Many institutions have gone out of their way to reach out to these stranded migrant workers. Let us hope that our compassionate heart, aroused with their plight, takes us further to remain connected at different levels and propel us to align ourselves with these marginalized, now and in the future.

Living through a time we did not imagine

S. Sula Francisca França Costa

Brazil

“**G**od is great! Great is God, and whoever is with God is never alone. What would the world be without God? The pain may last one night, but a new day will always dawn. And when one least expects it, everything will be clear. There is a way for everything, and if there was no way, it is not over yet” (Rodrigo Leite).

In order to help our most vulnerable people in some way, I was invited to participate in a health care activity for one week, a vaccination campaign for influenza. Elderly people came by car to the parking lot of a mall using a drive-through mode, and were vaccinated in the car itself. This took place right at the height of the coronavirus emerging in Manaus. All eight days, we tried our level best not to be affected by Covid 19, by taking personal care of ourselves during this service. People waited anxiously for the vaccination, feeling comforted in the knowledge that they would not get the flu. Many of them were in masks, but you could see fear in their eyes. Most of them were accompanied by family members. They thanked the team of nurses, technicians and members of the state health care department. Several professionals were recruited for the immunization campaign. All of us were very happy to contribute, as we were able, for the good of the elderly population. There were several gestures of gratitude expressed in words, prayers and smiles. Now, we are on extreme alert, because what everywhere we see is the death and suffering around us. The news given by the media is not good at the local, national or international level. On April 8, I found myself with Covid-19



Community (Sr. Sula in the center)

symptoms, with a total loss of smell and a headache that would not subside. I went with Sr. Maria Ana Pinto to the Basic Health Care Unit in the neighbourhood. Arriving there, I found desolate faces, desperate people with shortness of breath, fever and uncertainty about their lives. I was also very distressed, but thanks to the goodness of God, the doctor who saw me said that I had only mild symptoms. There was no test to diagnose the disease, but everything indicated it was actually the Corona Virus. I returned home, alert to the evolution of symptoms. Since then, the community reorganized itself to follow the directives to avoid Covid 19. We observed the distancing of two meters. I avoided touching the objects of common use. The utensils were separated. I had my meals at a distance. I was quarantined and we used facemasks at home, all the time. Fortunately, my symptoms gradually disappeared, and I felt good and healthy again. In our neighbourhood, there are already many deaths and people infected with severe symptoms. We experience the sorrows of the neighbours. The

government of Amazonas is preparing more for deaths than for the return of life. Refrigerated carts were placed in all hospitals dealing with Covid-19 to store the bodies. Graves, in the form of trenches, are dug in the cemetery. Respirators are sold at very high prices and the simplest ones do not have adequate function for critically ill patients. There are not enough doctors, nurses and technicians in the Health Care Units. What should we do at this time? It's a time that we could never have imagined. Our personal and community projects are all cancelled. The classes and internships at the Faculty of Nursing are also cancelled. We have to maintain a distance from others. We have news that our colleagues and neighbours are sick or have died due to Covid-19. How can we keep ourselves psychologically strong? God only knows; however, we are succeeding, thanks to the spirit of mutual help and good humour. We trust in the Risen Jesus who strengthens us every day and gives us his peace. We ask for prayers for the State of Amazonas and for the whole world.

Pakistan confronts Covid-19

S. Permila

Pakistan

Pakistan has imposed strict containment measures in response to the global Covid-19, including closing schools, banning public gatherings and shuttering all businesses except for those that sell only groceries or medicine. As an Islamic country the men of Pakistan have the religious obligation to attend Friday prayer in the Mosque where many come together for communal prayer. But this year Ramadan prayer was offered separately, inside the homes, and not in the mosques. Christians in Pakistan have online services while some have joined neighbors on their rooftops, where sermons are yelled and hymns are sung in unison.

Many Christians who live a hand-to-mouth existence in the country have also been laid off and, with little access to government help, are wondering how they will survive. Most Christians work menial jobs as street sweepers, cleaners and cooks. These have lost their jobs. And they live in crowded, multi-generational households where social distancing is all but impossible. In Pakistan at this time one quarter of Pakistanis cannot afford to eat twice a day.

As the country issues more stringent lockdown measures and forces people to stay home, many daily wage earners



Srs. Permila and Nasreen distributing food packets in Quetta

— from street-food vendors to shoe-shiners — now haven't earned a rupee in weeks, and they're going hungry. This is Pakistan's grave reality. Leaders have admitted: "If we shut down the cities we save them from Covid -19 at one end, but they will die from hunger on the other side."

Pakistan, focusing on the disaster humanity faces during this pandemic, has been encouraging leaders throughout the society to show their solidarity with the bereaved families of those who have died of Covid-19. With Covid-19, many wealthy Pakistani Muslims have been giving 2.5% of their wealth to zakat (charity), with donations going towards creating monthly raashan (ration packets) that provide daily wage earners and the less fortunate basic grocery items, such as lentils, ghee, flour, oil, sugar

and tea and also include anti-bacterial soap. These have been distributed especially during Ramadan only to poor Muslims.

At this difficult time we, of the Quetta community, are also reaching out to help those in need, providing basic grocery items, such as lentils, ghee, flour, oil, sugar and tea in ration packets for the neediest. We have also continued to pay the teachers who are on contract for our school, unlike most other schools.

Covid-19 has rapidly transformed life as we know it for millions of people all over the world. Many are feeling fear, anxiety, suffering from economic hardships, isolation, and other stresses. As a community we continue to pray for all those who are suffering from this pandemic.

**NEW
SAINTS**

| | | | |
|------------------------|----|-----------|------------|
| S. Mary Ann Mendonca | 97 | Nirmala | 03.05.2020 |
| S. Luzia De Barcelos | 79 | Brazil | 06.05.2020 |
| S. Irena Pilz | 90 | Brazil | 13.05.2020 |
| S. Teresa Emilia Pinto | 88 | Nirmala | 31.05.2020 |
| S. Luke Oliapurath | 86 | Pachmarhi | 04.06.2020 |
| S. Valdomira Vaccaro | 92 | Brazil | 08.06.2020 |
| S. Maria Flora Lermen | 88 | Brazil | 16.06.2020 |

Creativity, Care and Solidarity in Times of Pandemic

S. Ires Lúcia Grandi

Brazil

St. Joseph Nursery School of Caxias do Sul began its 2020 academic year with joy, enthusiasm, dynamism, challenges and confidence in a promising year. Teachers were working, planning, sharing and profiting from the training sessions at the beginning of the school year. Everything was ready to welcome the children who arrived happy and confident. Hugs and kisses were exchanged among teachers, employees and the little ones who came to the school in pursuit of knowledge, yes, but also for affection, love, a place to play and food. According to our plans everything was well done. But lo and behold, there was something that we could not foresee nor explain how it happened: the dreaded Corona Virus. Fear and unbelief enveloped us. On March 18, our lives and that of families changed radically. Working parents saw jobs slip out of their hands. Mothers felt the need to stay at home and take care of their children; children missed school; teachers and employees were giving information about the children's needs, based on their social vulnerability. Pandemic demands that we be creative, caring and in solidarity and not paralysed by fear. And time passes ... The Teachers, realizing the importance of being close to their students, use the means they have to reach out and get close to each family - the telephone. Families welcome these virtual visits with joy. Children hear their teacher's voice and are able to say how much they want to get back to school.

We also decided to have a solidarity campaign in our school. And this initiative affected not only the faculty and the employees, but also firms, neighbours, friends and people whose hearts were filled



Sister Ires Lúcia and community donors

with compassion. And many baskets of basic foodstuffs, clothing and cleaning kits started to arrive. The wonderful thing about all this is to see the joy and the emotion of the parents when they received one of these baskets. We were very touched to learn about certain families that are so close to us. What grows in their hearts is the feeling of gratitude. As soon as they got the call saying they could get help from the school, the families came and when they received the food basket, the phrase

was unanimous: "Thank God; it helps us a lot". This was possible because our school, maintained by the St. Joseph Charitable-Literary Association, is charitable. Families come from Oriundas de Invasões, on the outskirts of Cruzeiro, where we are located and similar neighbourhoods. All of them experience great social, family and cultural vulnerability.

This aid continues today, so we are able to assist families with their basic needs. Children, better fed, are able to play

with more joy using the Study Kit prepared with the help of teachers and school staff. We recognize that, as a school, we are privileged to be able to work to help our school children and families and we feel the affection, care, help and support from the St. Joseph Charitable-Literary Association. Courage is a gift which is supporting us on this journey, because God is with us and sustains us. And as Pope Francis tells us: "Imagination is half the disease; Tranquillity is half the remedy; And patience is the beginning of healing!"



Food to be donated to needy families

St. Joseph's Chambery Mission Centre

S. Malathi

Tanzania

This year a God of promise, surprise and grace filled our days as we began the academic year on the 7th of January. Formerly known as St. Joseph's Hostel, the government gave us a license in the name of St. Joseph's Chambery Mission Centre, since this Centre helps vulnerable girls. To achieve our goals, we had to plan, change and review our way of running the centre.

To our surprise, the Centre is full, with 60 girls. Therefore, we say, with the local people in the Swahili language: "Asanta Bwana Jezu kwa neema yako" which means "Thank you, Jesus, for your graces." The Centre is slowly joining with other recognized NGOs and some generous sponsors, friends and families to help cover the costs. The majority of the girls who are there are sponsored by the CSJ Mission of the Italian Province, whose volunteers raise funds for our Tanzanian Centre.

Saint Monica's Parish in Dublin supports many girls for their pre-college studies and tuition. The Croatian orphanage and the Anglican Organization also support a few girls in our Centre, and one family from the USA is sponsoring students for their education and for their stay at the Centre. We also have some "full-paying



Girls from the hostel gathered outside

students," whose parents cover the costs.

The response from the local parents and guardians has been positive as we had a parents' meeting where we expressed our future and our past struggles to manage the St. Joseph's Chambery Centre. It has been a big challenge for parents to give their daughters the economic support needed. Thus many of the parents of the girls with full scholarships understand that their daughter is getting an opportunity in the Centre to receive a quality education and all-round development. At times, it is heart breaking to witness the poorest of the poor in their struggle to generously support their daughter with personal items and toiletries. In some cases, the girls' fathers do not care, feel, think or understand their daughter's need for personal items or toiletries.

In spite of various family problems, some single mothers struggle to supply the basic needs of their daughters, without shedding tears or expressing their inability to support their daughter's needs. In cases like these, we provide some economic help for the girl's needs. We do witness women who are simple, humble, good leaders, hardworking, visionary, and generous. Above all they are in solidarity with the society and the Church as they reach out.

We are most grateful to our provinces, regions and missions who support the young girls and their parents in Songea's St. Joseph's Chambery Centre through prayers and website visits not to mention those sisters who opt for the mission.

We know that, to say it in the Swahili with our neighbors, "Yote ni wema," which means "Everything is good."

EDITING

Barbara Bozak
Eliana Aparecida dos Santos

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Navya Neelamvilail

TRANSLATIONS

Anette Jensen
Cristina Gavazzi
Joyce Baker
Margherita Corsino
Maria Elisabete Reis
Marie-Pierre Ruche
Preeti Hulas

CIRCULATION

Rossella Galli
www.csjchambery.org

E - MAIL

icc@csjchambery.org