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# CSJOURNAL

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry

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## GENERAL COUNCIL

# How do we respond to the needs of today?

**S. Philomena Pazhuruparambil**

*General Council*

In Psalm 12 God says “Because of the oppression of the weak and the growing of the needy, I will arise.”

This is a call for each one of us, to arise and give a creative

response to the way we extend our hands to our needy brothers and sisters near and far. We continue to hear the cry of the poor from different angles, in diverse ways. We also hear different responses to these cries. Some responses make structural changes and other responses meet the immediate needs of those who are materially, spiritually and emotionally weak.

In so many countries, state and national Elections are taking place. Those campaigning to become leaders are making great promises to rule

the country with equality, respecting the dignity of all people. Yet the cries of the weak are growing louder. It is heartwarming to read from different corners of our congregation that our sisters, along with our associates, have been so very creative in their outreach programs following the restrictions during this pandemic. Each day we gain new insights on ways we can take the safety and wholeness of our brothers



and sisters into our hands, not forgetting they are part of our common home, creation.

This is the context in which, during these coming months, six of our provinces will have provincial chapters and in which all of us will live our General

## SUMMARY

### GENERAL COUNCIL

How do we respond to the needs of today?

COVER

### J P I C

*USA:* Project Drawdown: Eat a plant-based diet

2

*USA:* Climate Change and Unwanted Clothing

3

### PROVINCE/REGION/MISSION

*Brazil:* Cultural Diversity and Conflict Resolution

4

*Italy:* A unanimous “yes”

5

*Italy:* Covid-19 cannot stop the projects of CSJ Missions in Tanzania

6

*Tanmaya:* Encountering people in their difficulties

7

*Denmark:* An Associate’s faith journey

8

*Brazil:* Vocation Year 2020-2021

9

New Saints

9

*Nagpur:* Magic in one’s life

10

*Brazil:* Communication and the charism of communion

11

*Pakistan:* The story of a kidnapped Catholic woman

12

Chapter in October. Great preparations and reflections are taking place in our congregation, evaluating the life and mission of our Provinces, Regions and Missions. We are also discerning the choice of leaders who will lead the provinces according to future directions, faithfully reading the signs of the times. At this point it is good to ask oneself, is there progression in how we now read the signs of the time? Have I changed my approach to my ministry since the context has changed? How can I advance the mission, relative to the current context, within our institutional ministries adding a little more prophetic stance? Touching the reality of today, one of the ways to be prophetic is through compassion, a compassion that all can see, not read or hear, but simply

see. Can we stretch ourselves beyond our set schedules, to make our places and ourselves a welcome home for the other? Chapter is a time to take a bold look at a courageous new approach to the signs of the times, so that each member may be drawn to arise and see needed changes and to participate enthusiastically in making those changes happen.

Everyone in developed or developing countries is facing severe health, social and economic crises. This is a collective crisis. Therefore, what is needed is collective energy and commitment to rebuild our community, and our world at large. The Spirit is inviting us to think beyond our own geographical space and to walk together with total transparency and

inclusiveness, forgetting our own petty identity, and work with the one identity of HUMANITY. In all the preparation for chapters and in the creation of vision and mission statements, let each one heighten the spirit of interdependence in all its forms in order to increase this collective consciousness.

We may not be able to control the pandemic, but we are in control of the way we live our lives through every choice we make. May every reflection and decision toward future orientations and every leader that you choose, lead our provinces and our congregation to rise up and take the road less travelled. Let the voices you hear, voices of the poor and others rising up, form the vision for the future, a future full of God's love and justice.

## J P I C

# Project Drawdown: Eat a plant-based diet

**S. Elaine Betoncourt**

USA

**P**roject Drawdown, a non-profit organization founded in 2014, is the world's leading resource for climate solutions. "Drawdown is the future point in time when levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere stop climbing and begin to steadily decline. This is a critical turning point for life on Earth – one we must reach as quickly, safely and equitably as possible."

In 2017 Paul Hawken published the acclaimed book, *Project Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*,



which has influenced university curricula, local climate plans, commitments by businesses and philanthropic agencies and much more. In his book, Hawken describes 100 ways that we can work toward Drawdown. Looking at solutions according to their impact on global

warming, addressing food waste is # 3, consuming a plant-based diet #4, and the education of girls is #6.

Over 1/3 of food that is produced is wasted. In poor countries food is wasted because of a lack of adequate storage and/or difficulty in transporting it to markets; and in developed countries food is wasted after it is sent to markets. Regarding

food consumption, we can help move to Drawdown by altering our diets to a mainly plant-based diet. Raising animals for food consumption not only uses vast quantities of resources, but also creates huge amounts of methane gas which is 27 times more detrimental to

the environment than carbon dioxide. There is adequate land available to produce enough food for the entire world population, with no need to clear cut forests for farming. Changing our diet to primarily plant-based foods and eliminating food waste would together make an enormous difference and substantially move us toward Drawdown. Of the top 20 most helpful ways to move toward Drawdown, 8 are related to food, and 4 are related to land use. As we become more aware of how

food, its production and waste, impacts global warming we can all play a role in addressing this. It is also noteworthy for us, as Sisters of St Joseph, to recognize that we are among those who are involved in #6 on the list, the education of girls.

Project Drawdown publishes a semiannual review in English, French and Spanish (available on the website), with the latest review containing research and analysis of climate solutions with 10 key insights for opportunity and action

across sectors. The website and the Drawdown Review present an overview of solutions we have in hand now to help us begin to bring living systems back into balance. These solutions are tools for everyone in what seem to be insurmountable challenges. They are not just for the specialists or select groups. As Pope Francis (quoting the bishops of Southern Africa) stated in *Laudato Si*: "Everyone's talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God's creation."

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# Climate Change and Unwanted Clothing

**S. Rosemary Wrinn**

USA

**H**ave you ever examined your clothes closet with a driven desire to declutter it? Did you ever consider that Mother Earth has the same desire too? She has a need to prevent billions of tons of discarded clothing from reaching landfills. The decomposition of textile waste releases toxic gases into the atmosphere, trapping heat from the sun, which causes smog, pollution and respiratory diseases. The volume of clothing dumped into landfills has doubled in the last twenty years, from about 7 billion to 14 billion tons. It is no wonder that Mother Earth is not well. Our planet earth is in deep distress. We can assist Mother Earth in regaining her health by our actions and choices.

It is important to expand our knowledge about how landfills affect climate change. We can also become more informed about what many people are doing to create new uses for castoff clothing. There are many ways to reuse



and repurpose clothing. Just because something is not wearable does not mean it cannot serve another purpose. An old sweater can be made into a winter hat and hand warmers. Socks can be used to make toys for tots and pets. The internet offers videos to show how to make new creations.

It is also good to take clothes we no longer need to a donation center. We can also shop for our clothes at thrift shops and upcycled stores, which sell

only clothes that have been refashioned from used apparel. Unwanted clothing can become beautiful make-overs. This may require us to change our perspective about wearing recycled and upcycled clothing. We should be proud to wear such apparel because we have saved clothes from going into landfills and are nurturing the well-being of Mother Earth. In all of this we can contribute much by becoming a promoter

of this global mission.

Over the years our American province has furnished two clothing stores in Kentucky, linked with our mission in Appalachia. These used clothes were all given new lives in the homes of people delighted with affordable purchases.

Recently, one of our associates organized a parish event to which she invited a speaker who is an expert in upcycling and repurposing clothing. She

displayed many samples of her work and shared her reasons for doing this – to help protect our planet.

In our province many of us take our used apparel to a recycling center

that diverts more than 700 million pounds of clothing from landfills annually.

The fate of discarded clothing is in our hands. Do they go into

landfills to create toxic gasses that make both us and the earth sick or do they become recycled or upcycled to have a second chance at life and help protect mother earth?

## PROVINCE/ REGION/ MISSION

# Cultural Diversity and Conflict Resolution

### S. Eliana Aparecida dos Santos

Brazil

On September 10-11 and October 19, 2020, Sisters Elisa de Fátima Zuanazzi and Eliana Aparecida dos Santos met with a group of thirty employees of the Maternity Hospital “Nossa Senhora de Fátima” of Curitiba, for a training program on “Cultural Diversity and Conflict Resolution”.

The program covered topics such as spirituality, communication, non-violent communication, cultural diversity and healthy relationships. In addition to these themes, we worked on conflicts and conflict resolution, attentive listening, critical engagement with the different, the role of empathy for understanding and correct relationships in a diverse institution. We also reflected on tenderness and commitment. All the themes were adapted to the specific institutional reality. We added the congregational history of the Sisters of St. Joseph, the charism, spirituality and our presence in the world to this seminar.

Employees were invited to bring a symbol which signified their life and to speak about themselves and their history. The sharing was rich and helped



Group of maternity Employees with the two sisters Elisa and Eliana

us to get to know each other a little better. Using the symbol of a window, we invited them to start afresh. The talk on “open the window and start afresh” led to the realization that “I need to start loving again, start dreaming again, start relaxing again and start smiling again”.

Among the questions which evoked profound reflection were: How is my communication going? What is communication? How do I communicate? It was an opportunity to look at oneself, one’s daily actions and often unhealthy relationships. The importance of this reflection was voiced by one participant: “I never thought of putting personal relationships on my list of priorities. Now I realize how essential they are”.

The method of Non-Violent Communication, created by Marshall Rosenberg, was presented and discussed at length. We worked on the

four pillars of Observation, Feelings, Needs and Requests, with concrete examples brought by the employees after group work. The Non-Violent Communication method was well accepted and participants decided to form a discussion group on this method in the Maternity hospital. This will help them identify how they are communicating and how they can apply these pillars of Non-Violent Communication in their daily lives and in their workplace. In addition to this, with the help of the group we developed the themes “conflicts and conflict resolution or management”.

The entire program was designed with the aim of presenting clues and tips and facilitating relationships at work, as well as developing communication with empathy and tenderness in different spheres.

# A unanimous “yes”

**Sr. Gemma Valero**  
(Superior General of Pinerolo)

*Italy*

**G**ratITUDE, joy, trepidation: these are the sentiments that welcomed the final outcome of the voting which, unanimously, expressed “yes” to the fusion of the Congregation of Pinerolo with the Congregation of Chambéry.

For about seven months, due to the pandemic, we had not had the opportunity to meet all together again, but on September 27th, it was really good to meet in the motherhouse of Pinerolo, both to celebrate the Jubilees, 50, 60 and 70 years of religious profession, and to live, in prayer, the official voting, with each individual choosing whether or not to join the family of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry. Obviously, in order to be able to have the full count, we had to wait to receive the cards sent by our sisters on mission in Brazil and Argentina.

After the formal request for a fusion, which we had sent to Sister Sally and her Council at Pentecost 2019, the process continued with meetings, via zoom and in person, between the two General Councils and with the exchange of documents and information for mutual knowledge about the communities, apostolic activities, and collaboration with the Laity of the Little Design, etc.

In October 2019, on the occasion of the Federation Assembly in Turin, we had the joy of hosting the Provincial Council in Pinerolo for one day. With Sr. Cristina, Sr. Teresa and Sr. Alessandra, we had other opportunities for exchange, and we are very grateful to them.

Our General Council lived other beautiful experiences of ‘sorority’:



*From bottom left: Sisters Ada, Mariapaola and Patrizia, top left: Sisters Liliana, Mariarita and Silvana*

the Provincial Assembly in Rome in November, getting to know several sisters of the Italian Province, and the meeting of the Extended Council in Rome from January 12 to 19, 2020, making use of rich sharing and reflection and approaching an intercontinental reality



*Sisters Mariapaola, Liliana, Ada (deceased in May), and Franca*

imbued with the same Charism.

In February, the visit to Pinerolo of Sr. Sally, Sr. Ieda, Sr. Philo and Sr. Mariaelena moved us. Even in the short time they had, they visited the five communities of Pinerolo and the small community of Piosasco (diocese of Turin) living ‘the culture of encounter’ and offering us all their time with availability and simplicity. The diffusion of the coronavirus prevented us from traveling to visit each other’s communities in Italy. For now, we are content with virtual exchanges.

Throughout this journey, on the one hand we felt ‘moved by the breath of the Holy Spirit’ which animated us to go forward with faith, despite the uncertainties and trepidation, and on the other hand we were encouraged by Sr. Sally, Sr. Mariaelena, Sr. Ieda and Sr. Philo, whom we truly thank from the bottom of our hearts. With confidence, we continue to entrust every step towards the “fusion” to our foundress Mother Speranza, who, from Chambéry in 1825, gave life to the Congregation of Pinerolo.

# Covid-19 cannot stop the projects of CSJ Missions in Tanzania

**S. Maria Giovanna Titone**

*Italy*

The CSJ Missioni Solidarity Panettone Campaign was ready to start when health restrictions due to Covid-19 interrupted the production of panettone, the undisputed focus, for ten years, of the Christmas fundraising of the CSJ Missioni and the tables of many Italian families.

The annual solidarity panettone campaigns in recent years have allowed for the creation and growth of the St. Joseph's Chambéry Center, run by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry and sponsored by CSJ Missioni. The center, better known as St. Joseph's Hostel, welcomes 61 young Tanzanian women, 40 of them with scholarships, funded by CSJ Missioni. Most of the girls come from single-parent families, are orphaned and supported by their grandparents, or are cared for by their closest relatives. The context in which they grow up is that of extended families with many children and adults to feed, who, especially in villages, live on a subsistence economy. Many of them live in villages near Songea, within a radius of 25 - 100 km, where there are no secondary schools and universities. These are remote locations that are difficult to access. The years of fundraising have made it possible to expand the structure of the hostel, provide for the essential needs of the girls, finance scholarships and accompany and support them in their lives as students. Just this year, in order to enhance their learning, a private

teacher has been hired to give them more opportunity.

The Covid-19 virus stopped the production of panettone, but it does not stop solidarity! On the Feast of Christ the King, November 22nd, the online Christmas Campaign 2020, entitled, "Let's help the young women of Songea to go to University", was launched. This year's goal is to support the brightest students, who are already on scholarship at St. Joseph's Chambéry Center, in continuing their academic studies.

To accompany these young people to the completion of high school risks, in fact, to be frustrated by the impossibility for families to support the continuation of their studies. With only a high school diploma, the girls often return to their villages, plunging back into a life on the edge of subsistence.

The Christmas Campaign 2020 wants to financially accompany the students who have obtained the highest grades at the high school diploma exam to continue their studies in public school, through the preparatory years at university (Class 5 and 6) and until graduation. The scholarship that the Christmas Campaign will fund will support all expenses related to studies: tuition fees of Form 5 and 6, teaching materials, room and board, health care expenses and family trips. The girls, in fact, often study at the other end of the country and families are not able to guarantee them even the costs of public transport.



*Sisters Marian (sitting) and Malathi (standing) with two girls from the hostel*

By obtaining a degree, the girls will have the opportunity to access the world of work and better paid professional activities. The result will be the improvement of their standard of living and that of their families, and this growth will gradually be reflected in their villages as well.

Sr. Clementina Copia, president of the CSJ Missioni Committee, writes in the letter of presentation of the Christmas Campaign, "Global education and training is the key to development in Tanzania. With small gestures, we can guarantee access to university every year for 12 young women, allowing them to enter the world of work and better paid professional activities with full entitlement. Certainly the main result will be an increase in the quality of life for them, their families, their village, and society".

# Encountering people in their difficulties

**S. Jaya Meda**

*Province of Tanmaya - India*

“**L**ockdown” ... “Stay Home” ... “Stay Safe” are the global slogans of 2020. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has a tremendous impact on the whole world. Everyone has witnessed a severe shock in all spheres of life. Fear of the disease has affected every individual and most countries have adopted some version of lockdown involving all social activities.

During this tragic situation, the Conference of Religious of India, Bhopal, came forward to help the government to survey people affected by Covid-19 and to give them some understanding about how the disease is spread. At the time, I was doing my Juniorate course in Bhopal. When I was told that I would be part of the survey team, I was afraid and anxious but later took courage and said yes. The survey continued for three days. A short training was given in the beginning to equip us to work in the field and carry out the requirements. Safety kits were provided. On the day of the survey, we were divided into small groups of three. We were all anxious about how the people would respond, but also confident of our responsibilities. Most welcomed us and appreciated our service, but a few were reluctant and hesitant to reveal any details. It was shocking to see and hear the plight of the people, rich and poor, young and old alike.

My group visited the contaminated area of Bhopal city. The protective equipment which we wore was indeed



*Sr. Jaya and companions*

suffocating in the summer heat. From 9 am to 4 pm, without food or water, we walked from house to house. It was not an easy task. I experienced the real hunger and thirst that people suffer. While walking through various lanes, I saw how people are facing several challenges during this pandemic lockdown. Concern about health, daily food and unemployment caused a great amount of tension and stress to many families. People became victims due to unpreparedness and lack of awareness about the pandemic and lockdown.

During these days I learned much about the struggles of the people which have become exacerbated by the pandemic. Since the lockdown, the majority of day labourers have become jobless, increasing extreme poverty. I saw families struggling for a morsel of food. Many said that they lacked access to food, medicines and other essential supplies. Women and children were suffering the most in this regard.

Lockdown has impacted

children's physical and intellectual condition. The entire education system is disrupted. Though online classes are running, students living in this area are from poor families and don't have the facilities to opt for digital education.

The pandemic has also impacted people's mental health. Though the administration has launched helplines to provide guidance and counselling, those who are illiterate or from the weaker section of the society are not accessing them. Many live with a constant fear of falling sick, lose hope and face a social and financial crisis.

Being involved with this survey helped me to become aware of the real-life situation faced by different people. I realized people suffer not only due to poverty, but they may face physical, economic, psychological, and social sufferings as well. Though I could not bring any kind of solace to the people whom I visited, I am grateful for this experience of seeing the hardships these marginalized people face in their day-to-day lives. It has helped me to understand my calling as a Sister of St. Joseph.

# An Associate's faith journey

Connie Lundgren, an associate in the region of Denmark since 2005, shares her life and her journey of faith.

## S. Gisela Heitz

Denmark

Connie Lundgren, an associate in the region of Denmark since 2005, was born and brought up in a Christian (Protestant) home. As a child, she did not doubt the fact that God “was there” and that she could pray to God. Together with her sister and mother they had the custom to pray evening prayer. God “was there” – until one day her little sister was killed in a car accident. Connie was 13 and prayed to God that God might let her little sister live. In spite of Connie’s powerful prayer her little sister died. This trauma and painful loss made her abandon all that had to do with faith, God and Church. But God neither abandoned nor left Connie. A deep inner longing in her soul made Connie try out many, including non-Christian, spiritual paths. She visited an ashram in India, practiced meditation. As a nurse she worked in a Christian hospice in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark. In 2004, while she was enjoying a cup of coffee with the chaplain of the hospice, they talked about a nearby retreat center of the Sisters of St. Joseph where the chaplain had spent a weekend. Connie was very impressed by the chaplain’s experience of dwelling in



Connie in conversation at Stella Matutina

deep silence and receiving spiritual direction. What she heard about the community of the sisters and the spiritual atmosphere of the house stirred a longing deep within her. Connie was sure that she was going to spend a weekend at this retreat center, called Stella Matutina – “Morning Star”.

“Since then,” she said, “I have been up there on regular retreats many times, and in the spiritual guidance and in the silence, the wounds that the loneliness and grief of my sister’s death left in me have been healed”. In response to the question of what the best spiritual advice had been, she said: “to try centering prayer according to the American Cistercian monk, Thomas Keating. To be in the silence of the heart

and meet God there is what has benefited me the most. I find a deep and loving presence that gives me the extra something to live in this world and make a difference for others.”

Being in close contact with the sisters at the center, Connie joined the group of associates in 2007. After her retirement in 2013, at the age of 62 years, she “extended” her activities by becoming a volunteer in the kitchen of the retreat center. One weekend every month she would offer to help and shape a beautiful setting for the retreat guests. “I try to do that by presenting the food beautifully and respecting the silence, because I know what silence means”.

The encounter with the hospice chaplain, the sisters at the retreat center and the silence opened the door for Connie to restore her relationship with God and the Christian faith.

# Vocation Year 2020-2021

## S. Eliane dos Santos Alves

Brazil

The Brazilian province of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry in Brazil relives a distant past which was and is a source of inspiration, of seeking the will of God, self-gift and serving our dear neighbour. The History and the Charism of the congregation are rooted in the mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Eucharist, with the mission of being the bread shared.

It was with deep joy and gratitude for this long and fascinating congregational history that we commemorated the 370 years of the Sisters of St. Joseph. We began our Celebration with a Mass in Curitiba, Paraná, on October 15, 2020 and inaugurated "The Vocation Year" in the Province of Brazil.

With the theme "Put your joy in serving" and the motto "So that all may be one" (Jn 17:21), the vocation year is an invitation to intensify the option to follow Jesus Christ and to witness to the joy of the Gospel. It is a commitment



Logo designed for vocational animation on social networks

areas of mission, intensify prayer for vocations, provide experiences of unity through vocation animation and make the media real instruments for awakening vocation.

We wish that all might feel invited and motivated to be part of this history

to live the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph through priestly, matrimonial, religious and lay vocations. It is an appeal to build healthy relationships that favour unity and cordial charity.

One of the reasons for this special year is to help people find meaning in their lives. Many of our brothers and sisters, young and old, express a lack of meaning in their life. Through this Vocation Year we wish to show our commitment to helping people find meaning in their lives by "discovering that they are loved and called by God" and "called to put their gifts and talents at the service of evangelizing action (voc-action)". (Pope Francis)

Through this Vocation Year, the Congregation also wishes to make its charism better known in the different

and to live our charism of communion, as associates, CSJ youth and those desiring to join forces on this journey, because together we are more.

In this Vocation Year, we are called to place our joy in serving, in what we are, what we do and live, at every stage of life, with the feeling of belonging to this congregational body and to the project of Jesus Christ.

For the Vocation Year we have planned many things: a dedicated hymn, a project on the faith of the Sisters of St. Joseph, prayers, celebrations, reflections, meetings, live streaming, podcasts, sharing, testimonies of life in mission, and others.

The Vocation Year will end on October 15, 2021, during the General Chapter of the congregation, which will be held in Curitiba, Paraná.

## NEW SAINTS

Sr. Rosa Helena Torcheto	85	Brazil	06.11.2020
Sr. Marie Alix Chanron	80	France	06.11.2020
Sr. Marie Jacinta Jorgensen	94	France	08.11.2020
Sr. Marie Aimée Chaumaz	95	France	20.11.2020
Sr. Marie Michèle Montaz-Rosset	92	France	21.11.2020
Sr. Louise Zdunich	94	Canada	27.11.2020

# Magic in one's life

**S. Lorraine Marie Delaney**

*Province of Nagpur – India*



Over these past lockdown months, much water has flowed under the bridge, engulfing lives and livelihoods, individuals and families, businesses and jobs in its swirling tide. Nothing has been left untouched by the virus. Everyone has been affected in one way or another.

Day in and day out we could hear the dreadful news on TV, mobile apps and radio of how many positive COVID cases had arisen each day. This was demoralising, agonising and tragic. We fed our minds and system with the latest statistics and data.

We took life and everything else for granted and this, unfortunately, is a major cause of negativity. When we take things for granted, we are not giving thanks for all the magic happening in our daily lives.

Gratitude is a way of life and being grateful for each day's benefits is one way of enjoying life and God's gifts. It is only during these pandemic months that we realised how often we fail to be grateful – for life, for the air we breathe, for the food on our table, for the job we hold, for friends and gatherings and parties and fun. Suddenly all this came to a

stop...once COVID-19 hit us.

Am I grateful to be alive each day? Didn't we hear of friends and acquaintances being alive one day and gone the next? Did I stop to think and thank God for my own life and for being alive and free of the deadly virus?

Do we not often take things for granted? And of course, this results in complaining, negative thoughts and words. So when we complain, we obviously find more issues to complain about and we lose the joy of living and loving. These become an obstacle for the flow of good things into one's life.

Let us recall the words of Gautam Buddha: "Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die, so let us all be thankful." Let these words be an inspiration to us! How grateful and thankful we'd be for friends and family, for air and sunshine, for birds and crawlies,

for everything around us. The magic of gratitude is greater than any negative situation and there are unlimited ways to change a negative situation into a positive one. All it needs is a practice of gratitude and the magic appears.

Have we not received light and guidance, help or support at some time or another when we needed it most? We grew closer in our relationships as we supported each other through thick and thin. It was at times like these, when our own lives were changed by a word of encouragement or consolation, guidance or just being there at the right time. These are the magic moments in our lives as we consider those magic individuals who have impacted our lives.

The evidence of the power of gratitude working in our lives is always the fact that it makes us happy and thankful. The happiness we experience after expressing gratitude attracts more wonderful incidents. And this is the magic of life, the magical power of gratitude and of being positive.

# Communication and the charism of communion

## S. Eliana Aparecida dos Santos

Brazil

Communication “builds reality” and needs to be studied beginning with the circumstances in which it occurs. Throughout history, several evolutionary aspects of communication have been identified in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, from the use of handwritten letters to the massive use of the internet, e-mails, digital media, social networks, and video calls, among others.

An important aspect in the context of communication in the Congregation, is to build relationship through communicating, sharing and speaking, keeping in mind the Charism of the congregation which calls for self-emptying and humility. Many times, we perceive a clash between the two ideas. On the one hand, our spirituality has emphasized hiddenness, self-emptying, the leaven in the dough that is not seen, but has an effect; this attests that the charism and spirituality of the Congregation greatly influence the “non-disclosure” of what we do. It also demonstrates the search for what is essential, that is, to do good to the “dear neighbour”.

On the other hand, however, there

is now a need to update, to give old things new meaning, and communication offers infinite possibilities to innovate and, at the same time, retain the essence. As has been indicated, we can see how necessary and important communication is in the life of the Congregation and have realized that the current situation demands new action. Pope Francis affirms, on many occasions, that the Church must go out

In addition to video calls we have other channels which help us to live connected, for example, the CSJournal. The simple fact of sharing the diverse activities taking place in different localities makes it possible to understand the communication aspects in the Congregation and through them identify how we understand ourselves, our activity and communication among the Sisters. We can also say that the



*Sisters gathered on video conference to pray for the health of humanity*

to reach out to people through effective communication. He himself gives examples of this over and over again.

The aim is to adapt to new ways and reinvent communication so that it contributes to the spread of the mission of communion. Videoconferences are one of the main ways of carrying out the mission creatively in our congregation. They respond to emerging needs and validate the importance of virtual connection and bring “good news” to more remote places. The internet is at least a potential, “space of communion”.

csjchambery website is a tool that reaches a large audience instantly, and unites the Congregation, especially in times of international events. The site allows daily events to be published so all the Sisters can interact in some way and be connected.

In conclusion, we can say that the mission of communion, the search for a truly deep and human relationship with God, with the people and creation, is the foundation of the communication activity in the Congregation. Communion is not possible without communication.

# The story of a kidnapped Catholic woman

**S. Saiqa Anwar**

*Pakistan*

The status of women in Pakistan differs considerably across classes, regions and the rural/urban divide, due to uneven socioeconomic development and the impact of tribal and feudal social traditions on the lives of women. Gender Concerns International reports that the overall women's rights in Pakistan has improved with an increasing number of women educated and literate.

However, women in Pakistan face discrimination as result of the patriarchal society. Some of the problems faced by women in Pakistan are domestic violence, honor killing, rape and abduction, as well as marital rape, forced marriage, forced conversion and imposed abortions.

On 9th of September 2020, Rashida Shrif, a 30 year old married woman, was kidnapped outside of her home in Pakistan. She is a catholic lady from the province of Punjab (where the cities of Multan and Lahore are located). She was coming back home from the national Marian shrine when she was



*Rashida with her son*

kidnapped with her two-year-old son. Her family witnessed her abduction and immediately contacted the authorities, but Rashida could not be located. She had been transported almost 846 kilometers (526 miles) to the province of Sindh. She was taken there by one couple, then from there, after one month, she was brought to the province of Baluchistan (home to Quetta where we have our main convent), 311 miles from Sindh province. Luckily, from this place she managed to escape with her son and reached one of the catholic parishes,

where she told her story and asked the parish priest to contact her family.

After this, the Bishop of Quetta, Baluchistan, approached us and asked us to keep her in our convent until they were able to contact her parish priest and her family. Seeing the need of the moment, we welcomed her and kept her and her son in our convent until her father came to take her home. When her family arrived to take her she was excited and thanking God. But the most emotional scene was the happiness we saw on the face of the small child when he saw his grandfather. We welcomed Rashida and her son in our convent when we were made aware of her need. In doing this, we helped her and gave concrete expression to our charism of hospitality as Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry. While she was with us, she told us about her awful experience. Terrified, she had stayed still during the kidnapping. Her family, and especially Rashida, was very grateful to the sisters who helped and looked after her like St. Joseph at this frightful time of her life. After one month. on 11th of October 2020, together with her son she returned to her family. We learned that, despite her harrowing experience, she was able to quickly pick up her life where it had left off.

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