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CONSIGLIO GENERALE

JPIC: a new mission context

S. Mariaelena Aceti

General Council

Our General Chapter is taking place at a time of profound change, heightened cultural and environmental tensions and conflicts of all kinds but it's also a time of intense communication among peoples, a time of new possibilities for knowledge and dialogue, and deep aspirations for peace. In these last two years of the pandemic, we have seen that the intensity of our interconnectedness has grown enormously. We have

deeply felt the impact of this new world, connected by instant communications and digital technology in all areas of our lives.

The mission has gone global. It is no longer bound by geographical area. In the change of epoch described by Pope Francis, "being in mission" living on the periphery, is like being at the point of intersection between situations of injustice and the directives of those who promote exclusion and seek to concentrate wealth and power in the hands of the few. Actually, this frontier where we are called to live the mission of Jesus is more digital than physical.

Paradoxically, in our interconnected world, I can do a lot, sometimes even more, for a local situation by working from my



SUMMARY

GENERAL COUNCIL

JPIC: a new mission context

COVER

JPIC

Province of Tanmaya, India:
Gender Equality: A Burning Issue

2

Pakistan: Responsible consumption

3

New Saints

4

PROVINCE/REGION/MISSION

Italy: Drawing 2.0 - The Little Design looks to the future

5

Brazil: Faith and life in Living the Unity

6

Denmark: Beginning Something New

7

Province of Pachmarhi, India: Technology challenges religious life

9

Pakistan: Pakistan supports refugees

10

Italy: We are a burning heart!

11

Brazil: "What Can I Do to Alleviate the Suffering of the People a Little?"

12

computer or entering the town square on the other side of the world, rather than plunging into poverty itself. Speaking out against injustices today can be terribly risky; it could mean getting not only your hands dirty but also your face, putting at risk your social status and even your life.

In the context of consecrated life today, advocacy is seen as "a prophetic activity of the Church", "a missionary activity of the Church in the world" (World Conference of Churches). This change in the missionary paradigm requires more adequate responses, suitable activities and, increased networking with the Josephite family and with other people in civil society and the Church.

If, since its creation, with *Gaudium et Spes* in 1971, the Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) has appeared as "a constitutive

dimension of the preaching of the Gospel" (GS n. 6), today, the commitment of JPIC represents a true mission frontier and a new form of living mission.

We have already seen this change taking place in the life of the Church when the Pontifical Commission of JPIC assumed greater responsibilities and became the Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development in 2016. The extraordinary social teaching of Pope Francis supports and strengthens JPIC and brings it to the centre of the mission of the universal Church.

Given this background, then, it would be anti-prophetic for the Sisters to not have the time to dedicate themselves to research, reflection and action of struggling against and denouncing injustice at the global level, animated by JPIC, because they are too busy working at the local level. It

would be equally anti-prophetic that the commitment with JPIC be limited to volunteering on occasion, to work which is fragmented and only when there is an urgency, almost always on the margins of what is considered more important. Can any prayer service or article, or even any statement posted on the website show that we are "immersed in the Spirit and connected to the world"? There is much more to include and some congregations, with the same fragility and opportunities as ours, have understood and structured the work of JPIC in a professional and clear way.

Perhaps the time has come to put JPIC at the centre of our mission through a conscious and planned decision to train persons, dedicate significant financial resources and strengthen the connections within the congregation and the Josephite family.

J P I C

Gender Equality: A Burning Issue

S. Priyanka Horo

Province of Tanmaya - India

Have you ever seen a building without a roof? Have you ever thought of this world without women? Have you ever pondered Jesus' life without Mother Mary?



These may sound like silly questions, but there is a lot of meaning hidden in them. No one builds a building without a roof; there will be no lives without women in this world and without Mother Mary, Jesus could have not been able to fulfill the will of God.

In today's world 'Gender Equality' is a burning issue. It is not that women are not

progressing. There are many women like Indira Gandhi and others who have been successful in their lives.

In the second account of creation in Genesis 2, God shows women to be the crown of creation; that is why women come at the end of all God's creation activity, as if she is the roof of the house he has built. God shows us that without women the crown of God's creation is incomplete.

Even after pondering these points the human heart may become like stone, for many in this judgmental world consider women to be the door to hell, a disposable object, a machine that is good for getting work done or giving pleasure. There are still many girls who are killed at birth if they are not aborted, many girls who are given in child marriage; some are tortured under the pressure of dowry. In this male-dominated world it can be very difficult for a woman to be self-sufficient, self-reliant and free.

But the world is changing



now. There are so many women who are trying to stand on their feet and are able to walk side by side with men. They are able to take up jobs and look after the family. I personally feel that women are able to do many things that men can do, but there are many things women do that men cannot do. There is a saying that since God could not be everywhere, God created mothers. Mothers are close to the divine, as they are the source of life. God entrusts a new life only to a woman. As mothers women nurture a new life for 9

months in their womb and only then is a child allowed to be born.

We do know that this fight for the gender equality will go on, but we do not know until when. It is easy to speak about gender equality but very difficult to bring about the change needed to eradicate the violence against women. Let us not wait for the entire world to do something. Instead let us begin from our home, workplace, society, village, state, country and then move to the world at large. Let us respect and love all sisters, mothers, wives and grandmothers.

Responsible consumption

S. Saiqa Anwer

Pakistan

For many years, people have become conscious of the impact of our daily consumption. This has come from both society and individuals. Everybody talks about responsible consumption but what does it mean? How can we consume responsibly?

Responsible consumption is





the foundation of sustainable development, the way to organize society so that it can exist well into the future. Responsible consumption includes ways of and ideas on how to utilize raw material and recycle the old in a useful way to protect our planet, reduce pollution and have the desired benefit from the material. Recycling is of major importance in today's world if we want to leave a healthy planet for future generations. It will protect our mother earth if we can put to a new use that which is no longer serviceable to us. Recycling begins with oneself or at home. It makes us responsible in protecting our surroundings and saving the environment.

Reprocessing allows us to use old products and create new and useful things. We can take a simple example from our daily life. If we buy a bottle of mineral water instead of throwing the bottle away, we might utilize it for a decoration or for growing vegetables or flowers.

Be aware of what you do; recycle everything possible. Besides protecting the environment, recycling can help us lower the expenses of our home. Secondly, recycling helps us to generate job opportunities and businesses. This is one way to help many people be employed. Recycling is valuable not only for saving nature but also for helping people by providing training on how to

create something useful from material that has already been used.

We need to continually remind ourselves to: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. When the world yields less garbage, it helps to return both land and water to their former, unpolluted nature. Recycling is beneficial to future generations, who inherit values from the past. We are responsible for the values they learn. If everyone values recycling and buys less we will be protecting the world with responsible consumption. We must take steps as individuals as well as groups, without looking to others to lead the way. We need to enter into the chain of recycling to save our planet for future generations.

NEW SAINTS

S. Francisca Inês Fing	92	Brazil	18.08.2021
S. Maria da C. Ribildi	92	Brazil	28.08.2021
S. James Mary N. Anthony	89	Nagpur	29.08.2021
S. Maria Josè da Silveira	90	Brazil	12.09.2021

Drawing 2.0 - The Little Design looks to the future

S. Alessandra Chiarini

Italy

On September 17th and 19th, 2021, the On-going Formation Commission of the Italian Federation organized a weekend of spirituality, conversation and fraternity in Armeno (NO), entitled "Pencils for the Little Design". The spirituality centre "Mother Candida", surrounded by the beauty of nature above Lake Orta, was the perfect setting for such intense days.

The resource person, Sr. Patrizia Graziosi, of the Institute of the Sisters of St. Joseph, shared her reflection on the heart of the charism given by Father Medaille, rooted deeply in the Holy Trinity, in the union of three divine and different persons. From here we receive the call to include diversity, that which is different from me, outside of my life. Giving space to the different is basic so we don't fall into uniformity, into the dictatorship of the strongest. Is it not the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph to work to bring about the 'double total union', wherever they are, and in all our relations?

Sr. Patrizia then asked, "How do we want to continue to give the world the gift of our charism beyond and within the generalized crisis we are experiencing today, within the limits our communities



The group

feel more and more?" She quoted Father Giovanni Vannucci, sj: "The present is a response in the concrete reality to the calls which come to us from the future." It is the tension and the push toward the future that must animate our seeking a new response for

ourselves and the people of our time. But where to look for the fundamentals? In today which speaks of what will be tomorrow; in the aspirations and irreversible change in habits and in the many meanings that persons, young and old, experience even now. Enough



Maria Paola and Teresa

with the lamentations of the past. Was that not what Father Medaille did? He wrote for the future, but beginning with what he saw in the present, his and that of the society. It was a time of division even within the church, as it is today.

The last half day was

dedicated to a "laboratory of ideas", based on what had been heard and reflected on. One question guided the exploration: "Imagine being in 2023: if it is true that the present depends on the future, what would I like to see already accomplished, in Europe, by the Little Design?". The Ongoing

Formation Commission collected all the rich reflections and ideas that emerged from the assembly to share with the Federation Council. From here we start again to put in motion activities that guide us to the future which already speaks to us and calls us to concrete action together.

Faith and life in Living the Unity

S. Eliana Aparecida dos Santos

Brazil

Every year the Brazilian church celebrates the month of the Bible in September. The province of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry in Brazil, gave special emphasis to the Bible in the month of September, as part of the program during the year of vocations. On September 6th we live streamed an event with the theme: "Faith and Life in Living Unity".

Three people were invited to help us reflect on the theme drawing an analogy between prophetism of yesterday and that of today. Fr. Claudio Prescendo reflected on the prophet Amos. According to him, "the prophet does not swallow a manipulated version of reality. He asks himself what is the will of God in regard to events. He is a spokesperson for God to pronounce his Word. Amos' vocation draws attention to the freedom of God who chooses his messengers wherever and however he wants".

The prophetic voice is always a liberating voice, a voice which

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Ir. Dominga Zolezzi

Ir. Elisa Fátima Zuanazzi

Pe. Cláudio Antônio Prescendo

Fé e Vida na vivência da UNIDADE.

unveils reality and points out paths. Denouncement and announcement free the prophets from the shackles of situations which oppress, exclude and alienate. Fr. Claudio emphasized that, in the book of Amos, political and economic power always walk together, in mutual dependence, and religion tends to serve the unjust system. He noted that the prophet's last word is one of hope and calls for conversion: "Seek good and not evil; . . . Re-establish the right in court; . . . Who knows, Yahweh may have mercy".

Continuing the reflection, Sr. Dominga Zolezzi began her piece

with a question: "What did the prophets of the congregation announce or denounce? In France, in the beginning of the seventeenth-century, after the war, there was poverty, orphans, widows, the sick. . . Fr. Jean Pierre Médaille reached out in that situation. With his heart in God, eyes and ears attentive to the cries of the people, he asked himself a question like every prophet asks: "These abandoned, suffering people. . . are my brothers and sisters. How can I help them in their need? In his long missionary journeys, the Little Design was born . . ."

Fr. Médaille was not the only one. His prophecy reached many others. Initially, six young women and widows; Henri de Maupas; Jeanne Fontbonne; Marcoux; Marie Félicité. . . And to Brazil, Theodore Voiron. These are among many names who gave witness to their prophetic call with audacity, answering the needs of the time, announcing the Kingdom of God and denouncing everything that threatens life and human dignity, and thus the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph took shape and spread. Sr. Dominga, in conclusion, underlined “the actions, the long walks and the insights. . .” of Fr. Medaille continued and keep on continuing. The prophetic vocation of the Congregation continues and will continue to be a long and exciting chapter to travel through!

Finally, Sr. Elisa Fátima Zuanazzi spoke about the prophecy of today, expressed in the charism of communion in many very different ways. According



to her, “to live the Charism is to live a trace of the face of God. For us, this the face of God is to experience what Jesus teaches us: ‘Father that all may be one’. Being and living in unity, which has as its aim to gather, reconcile, care for and integrate life with the world, our dwelling place, our Common Home”.

Today, we witness to prophecy through our being and action, revealed in our constancy, and living in creative fidelity to our vocation. Prophecy takes place in the call to social fraternity, that is, “a way of life marked by

the flavour of the Gospel” (*Fratelli Tutti*). With the flavour that we are all brothers and sisters, men and women united, who live in the same common home, with rights and duties such as caring for creation. May we be a prophetic sign for the world today.

Finally, Sister Elisa highlighted that we are called to “be a sign of hope and commitment to the defence of life; to be witnesses of the risen Christ, in face of a fragmented world. Let us not be afraid to be prophets, bringing to life the word of God through our life in today’s world”.

Beginning Something New

S. Gisela Heitz

Region of Denmark

After a long discernment process in which the entire province had been involved, the sisters in Denmark decided to sell their last property in Copenhagen, which had served the province for almost 120 years. The sisters started to discern their future. Realistically, they faced their decline: was it ethical,



Sisters Susanne and Marianne in conversation with the mayor



Guests around tables in our former church

humane or resourceful for a small community to have such a large residence? The leadership of the province initiated a cooperative project between the municipality of Copenhagen and the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Denmark, one that began almost a decade ago. Sr. Marianne Bode, who as the provincial had carried the project through to the end, says, “we realized, that we owned more than we needed and we decided to help each other sell our property and find new ways to live our religious life. . . . We tried to read the signs of the times and believed that God was with us”.

Today five sisters are sharing their life with laypeople in the senior living community “Saint Joseph” in the former motherhouse, and 14 sisters, along with 76 other residents, live in the large nursing home, a new construction on the property. On the afternoon of August 26, the former chapel, that once was the heart of the province, became the center of a solemn celebration: the official inauguration. Many came, both residents of the nursing home and the senior living

community, relatives, staff, officials of the municipality and sisters. In this sacred room, that for more than a century served the sisters for their daily liturgy, tables were set up and people met over a cup of coffee and ice cream. But - Christ, depicted in the stained glass gallery in one of the windows, is still there.

Among those invited was the Mayor for Healthcare of Copenhagen, Mrs. Welling, who officially inaugurated the site. She has been involved almost from the beginning of the cooperation between the Sisters of St. Joseph and the municipality of Copenhagen and said in her inaugural speech: “What was really important to us was to preserve this fantastic church space and give it new life so that people could use it in their everyday lives.” And she conveyed a heartfelt thank you to the sisters, “who had the idea to turn the convent into a modern nursing home and a senior living community”.

When Sister Marianne Bode took the floor, she thanked the mayor for her cooperation and expressed her delight at her great

understanding of the fundamental values of the congregation and religious life. She said: “For us sisters, it has been important that we can remain together as a religious community, where prayer and community life are the cornerstones.”

The convent building has been preserved in its original appearance and now is home to the senior living community “Saint Joseph” with residents in 28 apartments. The youngest resident is in her early 50s, the oldest is over 85. Five of them are sisters of St. Joseph; all others are laypeople with different backgrounds. The former chapter hall of the community has been turned into a large meeting room with a kitchen, where the residents eat together twice a month. One door in the building has a wooden cross. This is the chapel, where sisters from both nursing home and senior living gather for mass and prayer.

The inauguration, which had to be postponed because of the pandemic, officially opens a new chapter in the life of the Saint Joseph Sisters in Denmark.

Technology challenges religious life

S. Maurice George

Province of Pachmarhi - India

Alice in Wonderland was a novel written by Lewis Carroll in 1865, in which Alice falls into a rabbit's burrow and reaches a new world. Today we are in a wonder world, a dilemma, a new world of technology and communication media. This is a fast-changing world where we experience virtual education, virtual meeting, and online shopping, all with new technology. With all this our lifestyle has changed. Change that took weeks, months, and years previously now takes only days, hours or minutes. With Covid-19 we are experiencing a new normal with ever more technology and speed, and we moved into it by choice or not.

There are three aspects of this "new normal". It is never-ending, occurring all the time in an ongoing way; pervasive, unfolding in multiple areas of life at once; exponential, accelerating at an increasingly rapid rate. And in this context, we can distinguish three groups of people: the digital illiterate, those who are unaware of the changes; digital migrants, who are constantly trying to catch up with the changes; digital natives, who have grown up with this technology. This divide is visible in families, in the religious life and in the world.

Those who are fifty years



old or more and were not brought up with technology, are happy for the advantages of technology. But for the present generation the cell phone is as important to them as the air they breathe. Thus, it is very important that the virtual world is integrated into initial formation in religious life. The newest members have known and lived in this virtual world since birth.

Change is happening at a fast pace in communication media and in technology. Information is readily available on any mobile phone. Some even question the need of a university education. Artificial intelligence is expanding. Money can be accessed online. Our journey into this fast-changing world is a challenge. We need to change, change with speed, and take timely decisions or we will soon be outdated.

Jesus gives us an

example of how to change. He lived in a world steeped in tradition where the phrase "But we've always done it this way" would have been the way of life. He enters the scene in a most non-traditional way... a virgin birth, born in a manger. The methodology used in his teaching, healings, and miracles varied. He did not serve people the same way each time, but rather tailored what He did to the moment. Some of the activities of Jesus and His disciples went so much against the status quo that it disturbed, even angered, the religious leaders, to the point of their seeking his death.

As we move into the future we must offer formation in the new technologies, work to bridge the digital divide in our congregation and teach our members about the pros and cons of technology and social media. It would be important to learn how to use media in ministry, beginning with

initial formation, possible only if every sister has access to the internet and social media. We have learned and continue to learn that technology can help us network within a province or region as well as within the larger congregation and beyond.

In order to use technology

for ministry we must be courageous and willing to begin the work. This will also require that we be professional and creative in developing quality content, knowing how to share resources and how to collaborate with those who can help us.

We are at a moment when

we are challenged to put this new wine of technology into new wineskins – new ways of working, doing formation, engaging with others. It is essential that we evaluate our life and mission in light of the present reality, knowing that God is leading us through a new way with Jesus our model.

Pakistan supports refugees

S. Permila Isaac

Pakistan

Pakistan is among the countries that are hosting large numbers of refugees, having about 3.5 million Afghan refugees, with just over half, about 1.8m, of whom hold a registration card. Afghanistan and Pakistan have a long history of tense relations defined by five issues: sovereignty, security, geopolitical dynamics, cross-border ties, and trade. Together, these dynamics are important for future stability in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the broader region, and for avoiding armed hostilities at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

Pakistan supports refugees, focusing on protecting them and fostering self-reliance for them to meet their basic needs. Thus refugees have access to existing public services. While many continue to live in refugee camps, others have created lives for themselves in Pakistani cities, marrying and raising children, opening shops and supporting themselves. The experience of those living in refugee camps shows there is no guarantee that life will improve for refugees who flee to the border. Yet generations



of Afghans have made their home in Pakistan, and Pakistan proudly says Afghan refugees are our brothers and sisters. We offer our support to Afghan families in these trying times; they should not be forgotten.

It can be concluded that Pakistan has practically adopted a very liberal approach towards refugees from Afghanistan, in line with the definition adopted by the African Union. This includes all persons who are compelled to leave their place of residence and seek refuge in a place outside their country due to events that disturb public order.

Although not a party to any refugee-related international treaty, the government of Pakistan firmly believes that it has provided adequate

protection to the refugees from Afghanistan during their four long decades in Pakistan through generous administrative measures. But only administrative arrangements is not sufficient to not sort out the refugee issue; proper legislation at the national level for the refugees is the need of the hour.

Pakistan also needs help from the international community to find a permanent solution to the question of Afghan refugees, as it is not in a position to tackle this issue on its own. Therefore, the international community should realize this fact and come forward to help protect these refugees as the government of Pakistan deals with the Afghans who are residing here for nearly forty years since the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan.

We are a burning heart!

S. Mirella Picco Botta

Italy

This is the title of the beautiful celebration of the fusion of Pinerolo and Chambery, held on the 25th of September at "Casaletto" in Rome. Above all, a celebration, more than a time of meeting, friendship and an integration of two living realities; our two congregations became one Sacred Fire, as Father Medaille liked to say.

What did we do on the afternoon of 25th September? We gathered together around tables lit by small candles. The Word that kept coming as a refrain was: "Behold, I am doing something new: even now it sprouts to life!" which seemed to fulfil Isaiah's prophecy at that moment in the warm and insightful words of Sister Sally when she said: "Merger is



undergoing a change ... No one remains as before... We are like women giving birth to a new life, a newborn..." "How beautiful," I



not the simple disappearance of one group into another: NO ONE is disappearing, but all of us are

cousin, whom she visited... There is a new life for us too! That afternoon we celebrated a life

coming to birth. But childbirth is always painful and demanding because the newborn must be raised, educated and, above all, loved.

Sr. Sally continued, "This new life is a great responsibility because it includes welcoming each other and not just for a weekend." Not just our spirits, but our bodies and souls were also fed in this celebration. First, we had a delicious dinner. Our souls? Well, we engaged in many skits, jokes and games. So much talk, laughter,



said to myself. We are all advanced in age, except for a few; what happened with us is like what happened to Elizabeth, Mary's

joy. It was pure happiness, like that of children... Is this not the path of spiritual childhood that our charism asks us to follow? No one wanted to end those moments of togetherness and happiness but we had to, so we wished each other 'good night', for early the next morning we had leave for Pinerolo. We felt sad to say "Goodbye, see you soon!".

"What Can I Do to Alleviate the Suffering of the People a Little?"

S. Ana Amélia de Oliveira

Brazil

With eyes, ears and hearts attentive to the voice of Jesus and the action of the Holy Spirit, we, Sisters of St. Joseph who live in Marituba, Pará, felt our hearts burning and began to question ourselves seeing the situations of the people who suffer from drought and lack of water. We asked ourselves: "What can we do to ease the suffering of the people a little? We reflected on it. Whoever surrenders one's plan in an attitude of prayer and openness to the voice of God, receives the answer and the light to accomplish the plan. As a community, we received the grace of having pure mineral water through a well that was drilled in our backyard.



This precious, pure, healthy water is being shared twice a week with families. This wealth is the treasure found that generates life and could not be restricted to the Sisters alone.

The spirit of solidarity is a witness and commitment of all

who fight for economic social justice. And drinking water is a social right, the Earth Charter reinforces this right in the item: Respect and care for life and the community of life.

Seeing the families fetching water, reminds us of Jesus when he meets the Samaritan woman at the well and asks: 'Give me a drink' (John 4:7).

In addition to sharing water, we also share our gifts with the Caritas team in the Diocese. We render the necessary help to them by distributing the donations, conducting prayer services, reflection on the word of God and singing. In all these experiences, we feel that we are bread being shared to give life to the neediest brothers and sisters. We serve with joy, love, dedication.

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