

Danish

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# CSJOURNAL

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry

April - June • Year 2022 - n. 3



## GENERAL COUNCIL

## SUMMARY

### INTERCULTURALITY



**S. Celine Kalathoor**

*General Council*

“Interculturality happens when people from different cultures make choices based on faith to live together, learning from one another, with the desire to let themselves be transformed. Living an intercultural lifestyle is a ‘decision of the heart,’ a vocation, a gift of grace, a process of personal and community conversion. It is a sign of hope in today’s world.”  
Final Document 2021

At the Refoundation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in 1808, when the new sisters took their religious habit, Father Piron, who presided over the celebration, spoke the following

prophetic words: “You are a small number my daughters, but as a swarm of bees you will spread out everywhere. In multiplying, always keep the simplicity and humility that should characterize the Daughters of St. Joseph.”

Over the centuries the congregation has spread to distant lands, coming in contact with diverse cultures and peoples, with different languages, creeds, races, celebrations and rituals. Each culture has something unique to share from their culture and something unique to learn from the other culture. Discovering and adapting to the basic values of the new culture and letting oneself be challenged

#### GENERAL COUNCIL

Interculturality

COVER

New Saints

2

#### JPIC

*Denmark:* Working as a volunteer in the Night Light Café in Copenhagen

3

*Pakistan:* Women’s rights in Pakistan

4

New Saints

5

#### PROVINCE/REGION/MISSION

*Pachmarhi - India:* Ignatian spirituality immersion program “Roots and Wings”

6

*Bolivia:* Prevention and care of the sexually abused

7

*Norway:* Prevention of sexual abuse

9

*France:* LAC – Indian sisters gather

10

*Pachmarhi - India:* Communication week for the Novices

11

and transformed by it is fundamentally a decision of the heart made in inner freedom, faith, and love.

We read in the Eucharistic Letter: “. . . the purpose of our Congregation is to bring about this two-fold union of ourselves and the dear neighbor with God, of ourselves with all others whoever they may be, of all others among themselves and with us, but all in Jesus and His Father.” If we listen well, we can sense in these lines an echo of Father Médaille calling his daughters to form and live in intercultural communities.

We are all interconnected and we need to learn to view and to approach other cultures with a sense of wonder, respect and understanding which will help us to overcome prejudice and fear. Intercultural living is a lifelong process of mutual giving and receiving.



**Sister Celine**

“A community that is polarized into ‘US’ and ‘THEM’ will never achieve intercultural living. Only in a community striving to become ‘WE’ can it possibly succeed.” Anthony J. Gittins, *Living Mission Interculturally*.

Intercultural community is built in faith. In freedom and

openness, we reach out to receive one another and little by little discover the values and beauty of another culture. By consciously accepting and respecting our differences we are gradually transformed, and a new culture of relationship, simplicity and joy is born.

# NEW SAINTS

Sr. Gabriel Kachapilly	98	Nagpur	24.03.2022
Sr. Mira Fernandes	86	Nirmala	25.03.2022
Sr. Helen Nilan	95	USA	01.04.2022
Sr. Andre Chakkalackal	88	Pachmarhi	09.04.2022
Sr. Rosa Hilda de Castro	90	Brazil	11.04.2022
Sr. Mary Jane Garry	95	USA	13.04.2022
Sr. Isoleide Furlanetto	81	Brazil	13.04.2022
Sr. Maria Carmelita Sampaio	99	Brazil	17.04.2022
Sr. Zenóbia Sonda	90	Brazil	26.04.2022

# WORKING AS A VOLUNTEER IN THE NIGHT LIGHT CAFÉ IN COPENHAGEN



S. Angela Rammé

Denmark

For more than 100 years, the Red-Light District of Copenhagen in Denmark has been located in the area of Vesterbro in the streets behind the Central Station. Today, trafficked Nigerian women are one of the most prominent nationalities engaged as sex workers in the area. The mission of the Danish organisation EXIST is to prevent human trafficking and help Nigerian women in prostitution back to life by helping them develop competencies in cooperation with a variety of agents in Denmark and Nigeria. Through Safehouses in Nigeria women can have an independent life with work, education and rehabilitation.

One way of working with and for the women on the street is the Night Light Café, that was established by Karin Kjærgaard, a Danish activist, who is the daily manager of the project. The café is an ecumenical project and



*Volunteers ready to offer refreshments to women on the street*

run by volunteers. I have been a volunteer in the Night Light Café since summer 2021, and I join the group of volunteers once a month. The Café is a place where the Nigerian prostitutes are welcome for a break during or after work, providing a relaxed atmosphere to engage in casual conversations and enable trust building. Around

30 volunteers, mostly university students, are involved in the café. There are only two of us, I and another religious sister, who aren't students. The café is open every Wednesday from 23.30 - 03:30 and has one person as the responsible manager together with 5 or 6 volunteers.

The volunteers usually meet

at 11 pm to get the Café ready. After a brief team meeting at midnight the first two volunteers walk the streets of the red-light district to reach out to women, offering them tea, candy and condoms and telling the women that the café is open. These walks continue throughout the night, carried out by a shifting team of volunteers. Inside the café, the women are offered tea, fruit and toasts, and small activities such as jewellery-making or board games, that were initiated by

volunteers. It can also be that the women just want to sit and relax without talking with a volunteer. Volunteers are available to meet the women and their needs at eye level.

Volunteers meet regularly to learn more about the cultural background of the Nigerian women, their religion, their dependency on men and voodoo-priests, and also about the Danish sex market and the lack of responsibility of politicians to recognise the lives led by these

marginalised women. By turning a blind eye, politically, to these women who live in Denmark and whose lives benefit Danish citizens in various ways, the Danish state itself plays a role in their oppression. However, the goal is to create a Copenhagen without trafficking in women. That's why EXIST has set up a focus group in dialogue with local politicians who are ready to listen and act.

For more information: [www.exist-ngo.org](http://www.exist-ngo.org)

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## WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN



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**S. Shakila Bhatti**

*Pakistan*

**H**uman rights defenders, lawyers, and journalists were persecuted and sometimes prosecuted by the Pakistani government in 2020 for opposing government leaders and policies.

Violence, discrimination, and persecution of women, religious minorities, and transgender persons continued, with authorities frequently failing to provide enough protection or hold criminals accountable. Even

as additional charges of torture and extrajudicial killings surfaced, the government failed to hold law enforcement agents accountable. Several persons were killed in attacks by Islamist militants against law enforcement officers and religious minorities.

Members and sympathisers of opposing political parties in Pakistan have been arrested. Several opposition figures, including previous heads of state and cabinet ministers, have been

charged with politically motivated corruption.

As a result, justice and peace have very diverse connotations in our society and culture. It hurts to see individuals treat life as if it were their fate to be mistreated and viewed in this way. God's ideals are justice and peace, which all faiths believe and preach. Many are affected by the views of those who do not consider others as persons worthy of respect. These persons frequently leave women

outside of any consideration, yet women are among the most powerful members of our society. They are brave, willing to sacrifice, hopeful and often mothers.

As a Christian woman who prioritises Gospel ideals over everything else while working on the ground, I am aware of women who experience discrimination simply because they are women. And such discrimination is worse if they are not of the majority faith or skin colour.

They are denied jobs, denied domestic employment or are illtreated even beaten to death if they raise their voice and someone stands with them for justice. The sword of blasphemy hangs over their heads, and sometimes accusers vanish without a trace.

Because of poverty, women may be purchased or traded for free. Many NGOs and religious groups working for



**Strong Pakistani women**

justice and peace are hopeful, but the situation and the system make all their efforts feel insignificant.

Our presence is essential, so in our institutes we promote and raise awareness about how important justice is and how, through justice, we can

live in peace. Each human's basic needs can be met, with creation producing all of its goodness. Then each will have enough to live as a family and care for one another, and hold the land as a common home where all are united and respected, living in justice and peace.

## NEW SAINTS

Sr. Wilma Verônica	92	Brazil	02.05.2022
Sr. Ignacia Antunes dos Santos	91	Brazil	05.05.2022
Sr. Conrad Kattamkottil	89	Tanmaya	18.05.2022
Sr. Delphine Karimpanakuzhy	90	Pachmarhi	03.06.2022
Sr. Ana Teresinha Biavati	92	Brazil	04.06.2022
Sr. Bernadine Alvares	85	Nagpur	06.06.2022
Sr. Visitation Puthiaveliyil	89	Nagpur	08.06.2022

## IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY IMMERSION PROGRAM “ROOTS AND WINGS”



**S. Dr. Shobha Oliakattil CSJ**

*Province of Pachmarhi - India*

The 'Roots and Wings' program is a one-month program for Jesuits and religious sisters who live and follow Ignatian Spirituality. This program has been organized since 2009 by the Jesuit Conference of South Asia. In 2022, like in some previous years, it was held at Sacred Heart College, Shembaganur, Tamilnadu, India. This Roots and Wings program was a historic one because, for the first time since its inception, women religious were admitted into this 30-day immersion program with Jesuits. We were 22 participants of which 3 were Chambery Sisters from the Pachmarhi province: Sisters Susmita Ekka, Namita Parithykattil and Shobha Oliakattil.

The Autobiography of St. Ignatius, the Spiritual Exercises, his Letters and Spiritual Diary, and the Constitutions of the Society were all covered in



**Among the Jesuits, L to R: Sisters Susmita Ekka, Namita Parithykattil & Shobha Oliakattil**

this short period of time. The culmination was an eight-day retreat.

The whole four-week-long program was an invitation and a challenge for the spiritual life by going deeper into the roots of Ignatian spirituality and then challenging us to 'fly far and wide,' taking wings to be at the service of the people in need.

At the constant request of

his companion Nadar, St Ignatius dictated his autobiography to Da Camara as a legacy to be handed over to his followers. In the process, he kept checking on vainglory, which can be compared to ego. For Ignatius, devotion was to find God in all things. Whenever he had to take important decisions he offered many Masses, all in tears.

All the graces that St.

Ignatius attained from God are a patrimony given to us. St. Ignatius experienced loyalty and surrender to the Divine Majesty as liberation. Through intimate union with Christ, one comes to share his/her own experience – the experience that Jesus had of the Father, of God as absolute. Finding God in all things becomes the ultimate liberation.

The spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius take one to the core of Ignatian Spirituality. This is a practical application of God's great plan of creation, redemption, and spiritual growth. It helps one to dispose of all disordered affections and to seek and find God's will. This is, of course, in order to be at the service of others. So,

Ignatius, after practicing, gave the same exercises to simple, ordinary people, which brought a 180-degree transformation in their lives.

It's quite intriguing to note that the same Spiritual Exercises don't make much of an impact or transformation in the lives of most retreatants in the present day. It is important for us to recognize and be aware of the movement of good and evil spirits in our daily lives and be vigilant. This awareness will help us to be discerning persons who are created in the image and likeness of God. St. Ignatius of Loyola insisted on general and particular examination of consciousness to meet the purpose of our creation, to praise, reverence, and serve God.

This month was a time for me of knowing and living with Jesus. My communion with Jesus was very much strengthened, the awareness that Jesus and I are one and each of us is created in the image and likeness of God. A deep and strong awareness came to me that we are called and sent forth to bear fruit and fruit in abundance.

It was good to know and ponder the humble beginning of our congregation. Just as St. Ignatius of Loyola gathered the first companions, so did Jean Pierre Medaille, our founder, gather the first small group of women, after the war in the 17th century. May we, as St. Joseph Sisters continue to deepen our roots in the soil of Ignatian spirituality and take wings.

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## PREVENTION AND CARE OF THE SEXUALLY ABUSED



**S. Antonia Constantina Mandro**

*Bolivia*

**A**pril 27th to 29th a Workshop was conducted in Cochabamba by the Prevention Commission of the Conference of Religious of Bolivia. Its purpose was to make people aware of and train them

to prevent abuse of minors and vulnerable persons. Sr. Patricia Espinosa Fernández, a psychiatrist who hails from Mexico City, was the resource person for this event. She is a specialist in this field and provides awareness

training for many Church institutions.

There were 90 participants for this Workshop. Among them were lay people who are engaged in work in the Catholic Church, members of the Diocesan Clergy

and Religious who were the vast majority.

The topics addressed dealt with sexual abuse in general with the goal of knowing how to use tools of prevention in the ecclesial, educational and training spheres. During this event, we discussed and deepened our knowledge about this difficult problem and how it impacts psycho-affective and sexual maturity. We also had a discussion on the characteristics of sexual aggressors. In addition, the resource person noted that those who are responsible for seminaries and houses of formation for religious need to take into account these matters while helping the individuals discern their vocation.

Referring to sexual abuse, it was highlighted that between 75 and 80% of cases occur within families, a place where the person should be safest. It is extremely important to develop psycho-education in pastoral ministry to families. In Latin America, violence has become a “culture”, a situation that urgently needs to be eradicated. Currently, on social networks there is growing exploitation of minors. Sexual abuse should not be the issue only of those sexually abused. The whole of society needs to commit to the eradication of this evil which has been naturalized in a “culture of violence”.

The committee reiterated the need to work for ‘Prevention Support Networks’, creating healthy and safe environments, giving a listening space for victims and survivors of



*Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry and Dr. Patricia*

abuse and training people to be ‘Damage Repair Agents’ for primary and secondary victims. It is also necessary to know the country’s criminal justice code, the canonical code and the latest documents of Pope Francis for procedures in the ecclesial sphere.

It is important to mention that other seminars are being planned to deepen this knowledge and support Religious

Congregations in terms of protocols of action, prevention, codes of conduct and guidelines for dioceses and religious orders.

As the Region of Bolivia, we propose to train ourselves, to promote a culture of non-violence, or a culture of peace, and to integrate ourselves into networks that work in favour of life and listen and accompany victims and families.



*Group of participants*

# PREVENTION OF SEXUAL ABUSE



S. Anette Moltubakk

Norway

On April 4 the sisters at Grefsen welcomed sisters from the different congregations in Oslo to an evening seminar on the prevention of sexual abuse. This was part of a program being held in the three dioceses of Norway, which has a Catholic woman teacher offering the seminar in the different parishes. With the session offered on our campus, she had given the seminar 22 times in our diocese with plans to visit the rest of the parishes by the end autumn.

The importance of such a seminar cannot be downplayed, as became clear in 2010 when the bishop of the prelate of Trondheim was removed from office due to sexual abuse. Since that time the church of Norway has developed "concise and helpful guidelines on how to handle cases of suspected sexual conduct by an ecclesiastical employee that is inappropriate and/or deviant."

All those who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults, whether priests, sisters or laity, must complete the program on the prevention of sexual abuse. The program is a way to assure that the church is a safe place for everyone, a place where



all concerns can be expressed and taken seriously, since abuse can happen anywhere. All clergy, employees and volunteers need to know and agree to ethical guidelines established by the church. These include respecting the physical and emotional boundaries of others, avoiding contact with minors on social media and having at least three persons present when interacting with a minor. With today's technological development, it is important to be aware that the same standards apply in both the physical and virtual worlds.

Parish priests and parish councils are responsible for implementing the guidelines with concrete measures that become

part of our routine. Beyond the parish, those in monasteries, the seminary, Catholic schools, Norway's young Catholics and other Catholic organizations will be made aware of the guidelines which aim to go beyond abuses committed by church employees.

A change is taking place in society seen in sexual content in the newer communication channels and the accessibility of pornography, even to very young people. With these massive changes in society and our relationships, Church staff will be facing issues that have been largely absent until now. This means that with the ethical guidelines priests and employees can also be protected.

The seminar was valuable in several ways. It gave us the words to be able to express what this is all about. It taught us how to react when we see / hear something, what to do and how to follow this up. We also worked with examples of concrete

situations so we could discuss what to do. And we received folders with information for our study and reference.

This seminar was very helpful and important for our younger sisters who volunteer in parishes, read at Mass, give out

communion, teach the catechism to children, and are involved in the choir and youth work. Because of the many ways we interact with children and youth we are planning to create our own guidelines for the province on this topic in the coming months.

## LAC – INDIAN SISTERS GATHER



**S. Shanti, Jayarani, Sujatha**

*France*

**A**s we read in the book of Ecclesiastes (3:1) “There is a time for everything . . . “ After a long break of three years due to Covid-19, the time has dawned for us, the Indian sisters of LAC in Europe, to enrich an energise one other, which we did during our meeting in Chambéry, April 22-24, 2022. The three Provincial Teams had envisioned a gathering for us to better understand the mission of Christ entrusted to each one in our different ministries as we serve his people according to the call and needs of our time.

We were six participants: Sisters Mary: Lyon; Anna and Anila: Annecy and Santhi, Jayarani, and Sujatha: Chambéry, who sought to support one another with our deep sharing, using the image of “pearls” – both white and black. The white pearls were

our inspirations, learnings, mission experiences, and our daring to venture into the newer missions. The black pearls, our challenges, difficulties, anxieties, limitations, and fears. Together we tried to evaluate how we are faithful to living our charism and spirituality.

After an opening prayer prepared by the sisters of Annecy on the theme of our life journey, Sister Jona spoke about our first six sisters in Le Puy, who bravely launched into the unknown, counting on the God’s providance alone. She then challenged us



**Back: Jayarani, Jona, Anna (Annecy), Shanti.  
Front: Mary (Lyon), Sujatha, Anila (Annecy)**

to embrace our vulnerability and to move forward like those six sisters.

The theme of our gathering was synodality in its three dimensions, that of our human family on this earth, that of the Body of Christ and that of consecrated life, with each of us sharing our reflections on this chosen topic. We deepened our reflection through a meditative walk in nature, seeing, touching, smelling, observing, listening, all while respecting the space of the other. This enabled us to

relive the day as we recalled the significance of different ways we walked in relation to the others: in front of or behind someone, beside another, alone or together.

We were blessed by time spent with our elderly sisters in the senior care home. One evening we organised a cultural programme to get to know them. Another memorable moment was receiving their blessing to continue on our missionary journey.

And on Sunday, along

with Sr. Jona, we animated the Eucharist at our local parish.

These two days were a gift for us. They deepened our feeling of oneness and belonging to the Josephite family. They gave us an opportunity for open sharing, attentive listening and a receptive heart. And we were all motivated and encouraged by one another in sharing our daily lived experiences both in community and in our places of mission and ministry. We left the gathering united in prayer and desiring to meet again in the future.

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## COMMUNICATION WEEK FOR THE NOVICES – INDIA



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**S. Navya Neelam CSJ**

*Province of Pachmarhi, India*

**A**n eight-day session was conducted on Communication for the novices of the four Indian Provinces at the interprovince Novitiate at Fox Rock, Pachmarhi, from March 28 to April 6, 2022, by S. Navya Neelam CSJ, the Coordinator of ICC (International Communication Commission of the congregation) Twenty-four novices and six postulants participated in these sessions.

Communication is a way of life for the Sisters of St. Joseph

with a charism of Communion. We cannot live the charism without communication. The sessions focused on the fact that as human beings we are always communicating through all that we say and do. “Communication is an important topic for the Sisters of St. Joseph. To live our charism of Total Double Union we need to communicate and it is very essential for us.” “Through proper communication skills, we can build up our relationship with others, with nature and God.”

“Through these classes, I became aware that we communicate right from the time we wake up till we go to sleep. We constantly communicate using our five senses.”

This class conducted by Sr. Navya was based on communication as our lifestyle: we communicate with others, with nature, with God, and with ourselves. Our relationship with God, with others, nature, and ourselves are immersed in the process of communication. We

are in communication with God through our prayer. We are in communication with others through our relationship with them. We are in communication with nature through our interaction with nature. Our life itself is 24 hours of communication.

“The evening was the best time of the day; the hour of adoration conducted by S. Navya. Each day different ways of prayer were organized connected to the daily session and deepening our relationship with God with the help of variations in singing, music, videos, reflections, body movements, sharing, etc.” We became aware that we often have the tendency to look at God as a shopkeeper giving us whatever we ask Him, but now we were enabled to look at God as a loving Abba who loves to be in friendship with us, like a Father lavishing all His love upon us.

“I came to know the reality of our world through the presentation we had in groups on the War between Russia and Ukraine.” “Learned how to browse the internet for the first



*The novices learning to take pictures with a Digital Single Lens Reflex camera*

time while doing the search for Russia-Ukraine war.” We had the opportunity to learn how to write news articles, profile stories, and opinion stories.

Various activities like Bible skits, group and individual presentations, group discussions, one-to-one sharing, photography, writing of articles, writing minutes of the day, reading practice for the day’s Eucharist and Gospel, and shooting videos for a YouTube

publication, kept us all interested and active throughout the time schedule.

“My long-awaited dream came true when I got to hold the DSLR camera in my hands and learned to take pictures.” “These were joyful and happy moments for us.” “The class has helped me to grow in my communication with others, be creative in my communication style and experience God more intimately.”

## EDITING

S. Barbara Bozak  
S. Eliana Aparecida dos Santos

## GRAPHIC DESIGN

S. Navya Neelamvilail

## TRANSLATIONS

Anette Jensen  
S. Cristina Gavazzi  
S. Margherita Corsino  
S. Maria Elisabete Reis  
S. Marie-Pierre Ruche  
S. Preeti Hulas  
S. Ivani Maria Gandini

## CIRCULATION

Monica Bianchini  
[www.csjchambery.org](http://www.csjchambery.org)

## E - MAIL

[icc@csjchambery.org](mailto:icc@csjchambery.org)