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CSJOURNAL

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GENERAL COUNCIL

SUMMARY

SYNODAL WAY FOR FORMATION IN RELIGIOUS LIFE

Sr. Elisa Fátima Zuanazzi CSJ

General Council



The synodal path proposed by Pope Francis to the whole Church is an inspiration of the Holy Spirit that favours the experience of God and help us to believe and live life based on the life of Christ, in the midst of the demands of everyday life. The Synod is a call to all of us to live life as an expression of unity with Christ

in a complex and multi-faceted world. Therefore, entering into the dynamics of synodal formation is an invitation to carry out a continuous formative journey, involving all those who live Consecrated Religious Life as well as new members so that, little by little, they engage in the process of integral, reciprocal, educational, participatory learning and make

GENERAL COUNCIL

Synodal way for Formation in Religious Life

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the Charism of Communion visible to the world.

The theme of the Synod: “For a synodal Church that is communion, participation and mission”, fulfills what we aim to build in the formative process. On this synodal path all stages of life are seen in a dynamic of immersion in the formative community. This may seem new to us, however, the Charism of Communion given by Fr. Médaille is marked by synodality lived in an apostolic community. Synodality is a gift from God which leads us to assume with responsibility the following Jesus Christ together, witnessing to “Father, that all may be one”.

The gospels show us that Jesus taught his disciples synodally. Jesus takes time to observe reality; he meets the Father in prayer and accepts his will. Jesus takes

the time to listen, dialogue, teach and decide, and thus form missionary disciples. The synodal life that Jesus lives with his followers motivates us, delights us and asks: Do I have time to be with Jesus and listen to him? Do I have time to be silent and listen to the inner voices and the cries of my brothers and sisters? Do I have time to listen to the people who are close to me? Do I have time to appreciate the amazing features which the Mother Earth generated and provides with generosity and beauty? We tend to talk much and listen little. The synodal process in community occurs when we are willing to practice attentive and empathetic listening, in an attitude of participation, respect and mercy.

This reflection on the synodal path in formation led me to think about how much

we are called to be synodal consecrated religious women in the world. With this we can also ask ourselves: How much of the synodal process do we live in our communities, in our different ministries, with those in formation that we accompany and who live with us in our communities?

To live a radical following of the person of Jesus Christ every new member requires a formation where the person feels a co-participant in their own human, spiritual and integral maturation in a missionary community. A personalized formation includes our differences, where all members of the community are included and are subjects of this synodal formative process.

NATURE MAKING GOD VISIBLE

Sr. Matilda Khakha CSJ

Pachmarhi



God created the world and all that is within it and found it was good. Nature mysticism is the experience of being in a graced world, a divine handiwork that God found “very good” at the time of creation. We see God in nature, the experience of which brings about peace, bliss and joy to our lives. We the human beings are Co-creators with God.

Twenty-two sisters from the four provinces were able to experience God visibly in Nature during the Laudato Si retreat directed by Fr. Prasad Kuzhively, SVD, from 1st to the 6th May, 2023 in Provincial House, Pachmarhi, India. The retreat helped the participants to have direct awareness of the presence of God in and around the place.

During the retreat we had Mass outdoors, in nature. Listening to various sounds in nature allowed us to hear

the voice of God speaking to us. We were able to feel one with creation which is the blessing of God manifested to us. The preacher shared one experience with the hibiscus flower. The hibiscus flower does its duty of blooming, spreading its fragrance and allowing others to experience God’s presence in nature. The very next day, once it is dry, it drops down selflessly. Our life

too must be the same, working and selflessly seeking nothing in return.

The Bhagavad Geeta tells us: “You have a right to perform your prescribed duty but you are not entitled to the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the result of your activities nor be attached to the action.”

Reading and meditation



Sisters and the retreat director planting a tree



Celebrating the Eucharist in nature

on the encyclical *Laudato Si'* invited us to an experience of God's closeness to us and unsurpassing love for us and challenged us to discover God in the whole creation. We ended our retreat planting a sapling and making a promise to create awareness and promote action to make the earth and human society what it was created to be.

ONE TREE- ONE LIFE: A MOVEMENT OF REVOLUTION

Sr. Flonia Hafeez CSJ

Pakistan



Azam Bahrami, speaking on behalf of a group of environmental activists and scholars from Iran and Italy, has suggested a significant campaign to raise awareness on the victims of the 2022 Iranian Revolution – the planting of 500 trees by different Italian communities, or communities in other nations, as part of an effort to honor the victims forever. This

program – “One tree – One life” is being done by working together with a group of Iranian and Italian environmental scholars and supporters in early 2023.

In honor of the Iranian victims, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry are collaborating across all of our provinces, regions and missions to be a part of the “One tree – One life”

campaign, suggested by Sister Maria Giovanna Titone CSJ from Italy, liaison of the JPIC Commission. We have invited all sisters to participate in creating awareness among associates, youth, students, and in parishes. As the JPIC contact person from the region of Pakistan, I am working with the JPIC commission and the sisters here to accomplish this. In



Sisters hold the name of an Iranian victim



Students honoring Iranian victims

the region of Pakistan, the two groups of sisters in Lahore, the communities Masson Road and Don Bosco, both conducted a prayerful campaign.

On May 2, 2023, associates, CSJ youth, and support staff planted a tree for each of 12 victims, all under age 40. Additionally, on May 3, 2023, a campaign was arranged with the students of Don Bosco High School, Lahore, to create awareness among students and be the voice for the voiceless. The principal, teachers, staff, and students participated in prayerful activities by planting trees for each victim in Iran. This campaign aims to become a voice for justice, give honor, and provide support to the families affected by these tragedies.

On May 4, 2023 Christ

the King High school, Multan, with the guidance of St. Joseph sisters, conducted a prayer of solidarity in memory of the innocent victims in Iran. Students were zealous to prepare posters with slogans to take a stand against injustice. A time of silence was observed for the victims, also praying for their families, believing that history is made by people through their dedication to the truth.

We have created short video clips and pictures as a part of our campaign. These visual aids aim to create awareness and encourage people to stand in solidarity with the Iranian victims and their families. The short video clips depict the stories of the victims and the impact that their loss has had on their loved ones. They also highlight the need for justice

and support for those who have suffered.

In addition to the videos, we have also created pictures that portray the victims and the trees that we have planted in their honor. These pictures serve as a reminder of the lives lost and the importance of taking action to prevent such tragedies in the future. We hope that through these visual aids, we can inspire others to join us in our efforts to become a voice for justice and support for the Iranian victims.

Pakistan region has planted 12 trees in loving memory of these saints of our time. May our voices, struggles, solidarity with the victims bring about the change needed to respect humanity and the achieve equality.

ENGAGING WITH THE UN PLASTIC TREATY

Helga Haass- Männle & Patty Johnson CSJ

Norway



Plastic pollution constitutes a planetary crisis with impacts on ecosystems, biodiversity, the climate, and human health. Without new and effective control measures, plastic production is set to double in 20 years and plastic waste leaking into the ocean is projected to triple by 2040.

The Congregations of St. Joseph Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) attended the United Nations Second Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-2) on Plastic Pollution in Paris from May 29 through June 2. We were represented by Helga Haass-Männle, PhD Chem., a Chambery Associate who lives in Norway, and Sr. Jeannette Londadjim from the Sœurs de Saint-Joseph – Institut who lives in Paris. More than 150 countries and



Helga (2nd from L) with a group from IPEN, advocating eliminate toxic chemicals in plastics

many organizations having interests in plastic production, plastic waste management or in combatting plastic pollution, were present.

The aim of the INC-process is to establish a 'legally binding instrument', a treaty which aims to oblige all countries to effectively stop plastic pollution. The hope for INC-2, the second meeting of a series of five between

October 2022 October 2024, was to leave with a mandate to create a working draft that can be robustly negotiated at future meetings. This aim was achieved, albeit with great difficulties.

The INC-2 got off to a slow start spending three of five days offering statements on the rules of procedure, in particular rules for consensus decision making. Effective

treaties like the Minamata Convention (on mercury, 2013) were based on voting (2/3 majority). A few countries are supporting 100% consensus which will allow them to better protect their economies from the impact of changes to address plastic pollution.

The NGO status of the Congregations of St. Joseph allows them the privilege of submitting testimony. The following was submitted: “As Catholic sisters we have engaged in consensus decision-making as our method of communal governance for decades. Our experience is that through discernment and listening to all voices, we are able to make choices for the common good. We commend the INC for using this method since the acceptance of decisions made is critical for the successful implementation of the treaty . . . We recognize that consensus of 100% of the member countries is not always possible. By allowing for the option of an issue being decided by a two-thirds majority after all efforts to reach consensus have been exhausted, the rights of minority opinion are protected, incentives for compromise are ensured, and the INC can move towards the common good.

As an NGO, we strongly supported several objectives, including the need



Our CSJ delegates (L: Helga Maass-Maenle, R: S. Jeannette Londjajim, l'Institut Saint Joseph) with two others from Austria

to shift rapidly to a circular economy for plastics where the producers are responsible to ensure environmentally sound practices at each stage of the plastic life-cycle and prioritizing the elimination single-use plastics and the addition of harmful classes of chemicals and polymers to all plastics.

This agenda is much in accordance with the aims of the so-called 'High Ambition Coalition' (HAC), countries who have joined their forces to push other countries to aim higher when trying to solve the problem of plastic pollution. These countries include the 26 EU-countries (who speak with one voice), Norway and Rwanda (with leading roles in the coalition), Japan, Canada, Mexico, Australia, and others. Important global players like

USA, India, China, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia, could, during the first three days of INC-2, be identified as opponents of the HAC.

Nevertheless, the world's eyes were on this conference and the delegates knew that. Our representatives at INC-2 were impressed with the respect and the open minds with which the delegates spoke to each other. And they were deeply thankful for the UN seeing the immense implications of plastic pollution for our beautiful planet and pushing the world's countries to work on effective solutions. Helga remarked, “My eyes are really opened widely for this global problem, and I hope that INC will become a great success!”

120 YEARS OF HISTORY

Sr. Adelide Canci CSJ

Brazil



“Go into all the whole world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.” (Mt. 16:15)

With this Biblical message, four sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry, were sent from Moutiers, France, to Garibaldi, Brazil, on November 16, 1898. This event took place in the chapel of St. Joseph Convent in Moutiers. They arrived at Garibaldi on December 23, 1898. On May 3, 1903, after a seven-day journey on horseback, six sisters arrived at Vacaria to begin the fourth foundation in Rio Grande do Sul, in just six years. The mission of this new community was to build a school that would prepare “young girls and women to be excellent housewives, besides teaching them to read and write”.

Celebrating the 120th anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Vacaria was a challenge for us, because we had to make the general public aware of it. Therefore, we decided to create a Facebook page, where anybody who had studied in the school,

or supporters, could post photos, comments or memories of important moments of their experience with the Sisters at St. Joseph School.

This was a way to retrace the history of the one hundred-year-old school in a creative way. It is a story that draws attention and challenges people of all generations to tell the story of St. Joseph School

through their experiences.

We can say that from the initial stage the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph here in Vacaria had a double role, both education and health care. Thus, on May 4th, we celebrated the 88th anniversary of the Nossa Senhora da Oliveira Hospital. The birth of this hospital took place in a former hostel, built



Group of employees with Sr. Adelide (5th from right), reflecting on the 120 years in Vacaria and 88 years of the hospital



Painting depicting the arrival of the sisters in Vacaria

by the Sisters, which, in 1935 gave it up so it could become the Nossa Senhora da Oliveira Hospital.

The mission of the hospital has always prioritized good health and a commitment to life. It is not enough to work only in the field of healing healthcare; it is important to make people aware of preventative care.

In the celebration of the 88th anniversary of the hospital, an awareness campaign regarding care for dengue fever was carried out in front of the hospital, demonstrating the commitment of the institution to the community. The hospital, in partnership with the Municipal Health Department,

through environmental surveillance, distributed educational materials and explained the importance of prevention and care for the environment.

In addition, the hospital distributed *crotophaga* seeds, a plant that attracts dragonflies, predatory insects of the dengue and yellow fever mosquito, as the main weapon against the proliferation of these diseases. This initiative attracted many visitors interested in combating dengue and it contributed to the health of the community. Additionally, it was posted on the hospital's Facebook page. We also gave the opportunity to 88 employees of the hospital to record their messages, expressing their love for the

institution. Each day a new message was posted.

To complete the celebrations, on May 3rd, we had a program live-streamed and aired live on local radio with the collaboration of employees who had worked for a long time in the hospital. We concluded the event with a Eucharistic celebration.

The Sisters of St. Joseph, even with reduced numbers, continue to stand out for their mission and commitment to the people in this region, where education and healthcare continue to be the decisive factor in building a just society with dignity for all.

GRATEFUL TO “MY VEILED SISTERS”

Sr. Marirosa Orlando CSJ

Italy



“It was an enriching experience, especially because of the human relations: we shared some pages of our lives.” This was the final sentence written on the blackboard for my students, all present and somewhat surprised that even today I would pick up the chalk. They

had arrived with packages and dishes for a shared celebration and had told me, with a complicit smile, that they had brought neither notebook nor pen. Today, June 6, we were saying good-bye, celebrating with Moroccan tea and traditional sweets.

But it was not possible

to move immediately to the feast without a review that came from the heart. And it was all in Italian; no one even attempted to sneak in Arabic. These were women from different cultures who thanked one another, which stressed how much and why our meeting twice a week



Sr. Marirosa Orlando celebrating with her students

was a useful and constructive experience.

“The project: Advanced Italian was proposed to me by the Association Speranza (Hope), where Sisters Fatima and Refaella work full time. The Association, located only a few meters from the community of Jesus the Worker on the outskirts of Turin, is well known and has a long history. Sister Fatima and several volunteers manage it with dedication and offer a wide variety of services to immigrants, especially those recently arrived in Italy, networking with other organizations that are dedicated to the same work and often interfacing with the city of Turin.

In January 2023 we formed Italian language classes, both basic literacy and levels

1 and 2, based on what was needed by those asking for it. For the most part they were women, and so came in the morning when there were fewer family needs. They came mostly from Marocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Nigeria and some came from eastern countries. They needed to know how to express themselves, understand the language, read and write. This year there is also a large group of Peruvians.

The group given to me, level 2, was made up of women who had a fair knowledge of Italian but knew how to read only the printed word and to write with great difficulty. So we always used cursive in sentences, with terms becoming gradually more complex, those that would be useful to them in daily life. They were also struggling

with their children’s schooling, needing to read school notices. And they had to be able to face the difficulties of offices and hospitals.

I greeted them as “my veiled sisters,” diving into the female muslim culture, women honored and peaceful following the Quran and with the same family issues as ours. They also face the difficulty of living with totally inadequate finances and the courage to raise thier children with strength and care, and the patience that this inevitably requires today. I am grateful to God for this experience which I hope to continue and which has deeply touched me. It has opened horizons which had previously been at a distance and I came to know a rich humanity which continues to engage me.

NEW SAINTS

S. Jeanne Bornard	79	France-Belg	18.04.2023
S. Paula Anna	91	Denmark	28.04.2023
S. Verginia Lucia Ansolin	98	Brazil	07.05.2023
S. Olga Maria Kopacheski	89	Brazil	17.05.2023
S. Martha Flores Valiera	95	Brazil	20.05.2023
S. Dennis Marie Sullivan	97	USA	18.03.2023
S. Margarida Da Sao Jose	83	Brazil	31.05.2023
S. Luiza Helena	89	Brazil	11.06.2023
S. Maria Enilda	98	Brazil	27.06.2023

CELEBRATION OF VOWS IN THE NORTHEAST OF INDIA

Sr. Navya Neelamvilail CSJ

Pachmarhi



On May 20, 2023 S. Shalestina Nongrum made her final commitment in Mawkyntew, Shillong, in the state of Meghalaya in the northeast of India – a two-day train journey to the provincial house in Madhya Pradesh. The Pachmarhi province has been present there since 2011, responding to the needs of the people, one third of whom are below the poverty line and three-quarters who are Christian, in a country where Christians are only 2% of the population.

Navya – Shalestina, you are the first vocation to our congregation from the state of Meghalaya. Tell me something about your vocation story.

Shalestina – I think I have been called by God from the beginning; I always used to say that I wanted to become a nun. When I reached 10th standard, the St. Joseph Sisters took over the hostel. Their way of life inspired me, especially Sisters Rita, Sandhya and Teresa. Sr.

Sandhya always interacted with us and shared her experiences. That awakened in me the desire to join the sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry.

Navya – Did you have any difficulties or fears about joining a congregation that was far away in another state?

Shalestina – My first fear was that I would not be able to see or meet my parents if I went far away. My family asked me why I wanted to go so far

away. Since I had strong desire to join I didn't feel sad about this.

Navya – I know that all the sisters who are in the Northeast of India choose to be in a religious habit. What was the reaction from the people about you wearing a saree when you were stationed in Meghalaya?

Shalestina – Generally, people prefer a religious habit but I felt that they accepted me



Sr. Shalestina pronouncing the vows



Family and friends of Sister Shalestina gathered for the celebration

wearing a saree. My mother especially, seemed very happy seeing me in a saree. Only my aunts were opposed.

Navya – Our sisters are there for about 12 years now. How do the people see the presence of the Sisters of St. Joseph there?

Shalestina – The people are very happy with the work of the sisters. They are working in the school and go to the

villages every Sunday for Mass and pastoral visits. The sisters are also offering medical service at the dispensary they have, the only medical facility in the area. The sisters are hospitable, welcoming and approachable, even trying to communicate in our own language Khasi which is a foreign language for them. All this gives the message that they care for the people.

Navya – Your final profession ceremony was organised in your own parish. We normally keep it in our Provincial house at Pachmarhi. What was your experience?

Shalestina - I was very happy and feel privileged to have had my profession there in Mawkynrew, my own parish. It was a day of blessings and grace-filled moments where I said my total ‘yes’ to God. My family and the people were very happy to attend my profession. Many girls also were present especially from the hostel and I feel God may have inspired some to follow Him. “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nation” (Jer. 1:5). These words are very alive for me today.



DREAMS AND REALITY

Sr. Vera Lúcia dos Santos CSJ

Brazil



On May 9th 2023, the “Association of Women of Charity of Home and School of St. Vincent de Paul” in the city of Lapa, Paraná, completed 120 years and the Mother’s Club 36 years. The Anniversary of these two associations was celebrated with a Solemn Mass and refreshments

in the institution’s Meeting Room.

During the celebration, at various moment, people paid tribute to and recalled the Association of Women of Charity of Home and School St. Vincent de Paula and the Mother’s Club. They emphasised the role of Sisters of St. Joseph throughout this

process. The president of the Association, Maria de Lourdes Hossmann, highlighted many times that “all the work carried out by association would not have been possible without the Sisters of Saint Joseph nor would it be possible to continue it.”

What drew attention, in addition to the emphasis given



Sisters with a group of residents of the nursing home



Sisters present at the celebration of the 120th anniversary of the nursing home and daycare center

to our presence as Sisters of St. Joseph, was the sensitivity of a group of women to the social needs of their time (1900-1906) when many elderly people and orphans were alone and destitute.

The Asylum began because of a dream of Dona Eugênia, a woman of the city belonging to the Apostolate of Prayer. She dreamed that a saint asked her to build an orphan asylum. She spoke about her dream to Fr. Eriberto and said that it was St. Vincent de Paul. Since she didn't have the money to buy the house, she started to raise funds, and with these funds, made a down payment on an "old house, very rundown and in need of repair".

The exact date when the work in the orphan asylum began is not known.

According to Maria de Lourdes Hossmann's testimony, after Dona Eugenia's dream, the Association of Women of Charity of Home and School of St. Vincent de Paul was founded on May 9, 1903. We read in the diary of Dona Eugênia that at first everything was very difficult, but the situation improved with the presence of the Sisters. She writes: "I struggled a lot, but the situation changed for the better after the sisters came". Dona Eugênia and other women from the city took the lead in this home, but they saw that they would not be able to handle the task alone. The residents of the city of Lapa were involved and supported this effort and there was never a lack of donations for its maintenance. However,

they were mothers, wives and housewives and did not have much time to take care of the elderly.

Fr. Lamartine Miranda went with the president of the Association of Women of Charity of Home and School of St. Vincent de Paul to talk to Sr. Léonie Blanchet (the then Provincial Superior of Paraná of the Congregation of St. Joseph of Moutiers; the merger with Chambéry took place in 1953 - 1954) asking for religious to help them in the Lapa Asylum. Sr. Léonie accepted on the condition that a school for girls be opened in the city as well. They accepted the request and it was done.

The first sisters sent to the mission were Calixta Duc and the novice Inêz Stella. The conditions of the place where



Orphaned children at the school in 1956

they lived were very poor. Over the years, the name of Asylum St. Vincent de Paul was changed to Home and School of St. Vincent de Paul. They began to receive only elderly women and orphans, poor girls and daughters of working mothers. Later, they moved to a larger area.

During than a century, many Sisters worked in Lapa, dedicating their lives to this mission. They were the presence of God's love and our Charism of communion. They left signs of their presence and are still remembered and loved by the people there. And as far as we know, they remember the School with nostalgia, they love the Home and School and the people of Lapa. The mission is not over, it continues!

Due to unavoidable circumstances we are late in publishing the present issue of CSJournal. Our Apologies.

- International Communication Commission

EDITING

S. Barbara Bozak
S. Eliana Aparecida dos Santos

GRAPHIC DESIGN

S. Laveena D'Souza

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

E - MAIL

icc@csjchambery.org