

Danish

English

French

Italian

Portuguese

CSJOURNAL

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry

July - August • Year 2023 - n. 4



GENERAL COUNCIL

SUMMARY

SYNODALITY AND MISSION: THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

Sr. Dolores Lahr CSJ

Superior General



The 16th Synod of Bishops has been a topic for our Church since Pope Francis announced the news in October 2021 and initiated the three-year process. The name of the Synod is a bit of a misnomer. It is a meeting of bishops, however, there will be other people participating, including laity, deacons, and

men and women religious from around the world.

As we know, the theme of the upcoming 16th Synod of Bishops is: "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission." In the last issue of the CSJournal Sister Elisa wrote about the Synodal Way for Formation in Religious Life. Now I would

GENERAL COUNCIL

Synodality and Mission: The Journey Continues

COVER

JPIC

Brazil: Season of Creation

3

Italy: Refugees at stake: The future of Human Rights

4

IFC

General Treasurer: Global Missionary Fund: Reporting that makes you grow

6

PROVINCE/REGION/MISSION

Bolivia: A Project that Empowers

8

Norway: Experience at a UN Conference in Paris

10

New Saints

11

Pakistan: Serving a neglected itinerant community

12

Italy: Sisters All

14

France/Belgium: Call to the Congregation: One Tree - One life

15



like to offer a few reflections on the aspect of mission and synodality.

First and foremost, Synodality indicates walking together and listening to one another, but above all listening to the Holy Spirit. And by 'together,' emphasis is given to co-responsibility, and co-responsibility in mission. The questions are posed: "How can we better share gifts and tasks in service of the Gospel?" "How can we walk together towards a shared awareness of the meaning and content of mission?" The 'we' is inclusive of all members, and not exclusive to the bishops.

A missionary synodal Church has a duty to ask itself how it can recognize and value the contribution that each baptized person can offer in mission. The late Father Anthony Gittins, a renowned

expert in interculturality and mission, wrote that 'being in mission is the greatest religious adventure.' He was not writing about mission just for women and men religious nor referencing missionaries, those who leave their country of origin to minister in a totally different one. Rather, he includes all baptized Christians in his statement.

Mission has a central place in the Synod and in the synodal process. It is a call to all baptized Christians to communion and collaboration in service to the Gospel. As Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry, together with our Associates and other lay collaborators we are called to this great religious adventure.

Each one in every Province, Region and Mission is called to discern the movement of the Spirit in

his/her respective locale. For example, what calls of the Spirit are heard in the Amazonian area of Brazil and Bolivia? To what mission and ministry are we being called in the growing mission of Tanzania? What responses are needed in our Provinces, Regions and Mission in the continent of Europe? How are we hearing the cries of the poor and vulnerable? The calls are distinct, unique to the respective culture; how do we listen deeply and respond in synodality? How are we inviting the people with whom we minister and with whom are in mission to come together with us to journey as one?

The process of synodality, this journey to which Pope Francis has called us, will not conclude with the meeting in October 2024. This is an ongoing journey, one that calls us to a life-long process wherein all are called to listen, to read the signs of the times, and respond as one, moving together in mission. Let us be attentive to the whisperings of the Spirit, the calls of the poor and vulnerable as we discern how we, the Congregation of the Great Love of God, will respond in mission, in synodality, and move together into our future.

SEASON OF CREATION

Sr. Iraci di Fatima Cirino dos Santos CSJ

Brazil



Each year, people are encouraged to enter the dynamics of the Season of Creation. This article aims to raise our awareness of this important movement called the Season of Creation. It also wants to awaken us to greater participation and organization, to enrich and energize everyone for a greater connection to and care for all forms of planetary life.

Historically, the 'Season of Creation' is a Global Catholic Climate Movement, in connection with the efforts of several world initiatives, to act in defence of the Planet, with an emphasis on care. In 1988, this ecumenical initiative proposed that Christians all over the world seek reconciliation with the Creator.

Each year, a theme is suggested and accompanied by resources that guide the celebration of the Season of Creation. The theme of 2023 is: "May justice and peace flow".

The theme of each year moves everyone, believers and non-believers alike, to live in harmony and be responsible stewards of our Common Home. Responsibility implies that everyone cares for life in all its forms; care that goes beyond protecting. It involves loving, contemplating and feeling part of God's creative work.

Following the guidelines and teachings of Pope Francis who exhorts human beings

to a sense of belonging as part of God's creative work, there is an urgent need for a "new humanism", with the aim of valuing human beings in their dignity, that is, understanding human nature, what constitutes it and what characterizes it as a human being.

Laudato Si, number 16, contextualizes human dignity starting with the intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the



planet, with the conviction that everything in the world is closely interconnected.

Pope Francis encourages and calls on men and women of good will and the international community to change our times; encourages an economics of solidarity; proposes a model of inclusive and liberating education; guides the urgency of caring for our common home and for a global union of solidarity in the midst of humanitarian crises. That is, he proposes that the human vocation be embodied in humanity living in hope.

This hope concretizes care for nature and the preservation of ecosystems, in a way that is best for the present and future of the planet and its inhabitants.

Finally, the “new humanism” calls the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry, in line with their spirituality, to live in full communion with God, with all people and with each other, revealing their dignity as sons and daughters of God and brothers and sisters of one another. It is a journey that must be followed with dedication and commitment,

in all forms of service, in order to restore human dignity, interconnected with the different forms of planetary life.

The Season of Creation allows us to recognize ourselves as “the work of the Lord’s creative act”, invites us to contemplate nature and everything that dwells in it and calls us to renew our relationship with the Creator and with creation, through celebration, conversion and joint commitment, manifested in a new lifestyle.

REFUGEES: AT STAKE, THE FUTURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Sr. Mariapia Sberna CSJ

Italy



On the World Day of Refugees 2023, Centro Astalli (Jesuit Refugee Service in Italy) opened the campaign “Refugees: at stake, the future of human rights.”

The theme was the focus of a colloquium on migration, organized on June 15 at the Gregorian University. Speakers included Cardinal

José Tolentino of Mendonça, Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education of the Holy See, the philosopher Roberta De Monticelli and the writer Paolo Rumiz. Journalist Marco Damilano was moderator. Opening the program were testimonies from women refugees who had been welcomed at Centro Astalli and

a performance by the singer Evelina Maghnagi.

The number of persons who are refugees or displaced rose to the record number of 108.4 million in 2022, with an unprecedented increase of 19.1 million from the previous year, as noted in the UNHCR annual report, *Global Trends in Forced Displacement 2022*.

In the current year the trend in the number of persons forced to flee because of war, persecution, violence and human rights violations at the global level shows no sign of slowing down. This is due in part to the outbreak of conflict in Sudan which has caused a new exodus. Thus the number of persons fleeing is estimate to be 110 million through last May. It is getting easier to “die at the border,” and easier to get stranded in places where human rights are not respected and no spotlight shines on what is happening.

Is Europe today able to hear the cry of a wounded humanity and to take active steps to promote peace? It is time that the EU finds the courage to manage migration with policies that take people from war, from massacres at sea, from the dangers of land routes, and those who turn their desperation into



profit. Recently the Italian president, Sergio Mattarella, urged that he wants a Europe that is not “a sum of national moods and interests” but a common project of human development, firmly founded on shared values.

In Italy, too, we need an extra effort to deal with the complex challenges of today, with a view able to move beyond the logic of emergency.

What has been an urgent need for years is an adequate, widespread welcome system tailored to the real needs of those who arrive asking protection. Even more needed is a participatory and innovative plan to offer solutions for sustainable integration that is able to value the contribution of everyone.

The Italian constitution is the guardian of rights and the dignity of those who flee war and oppression, who seeks to build for themselves and their family a free life, who, deprived of the rights of citizenship, live in this country, contributing to the human and cultural development before the economic.

For the Day of Refugees 2023 Centro Astalli wanted to reiterate that welcoming refugees is an opportunity to build a more just society, a more well-rounded democracy.



GLOBAL MISSIONARY FUND: REPORTING THAT MAKES YOU GROW

Sr. Mariaelena Aceti CSJ

General Treasurer



During 2022, over \$530,000 dollars from the Global Missionary Fund was distributed throughout the Congregation. Those funds financed 56 projects focusing on service to those living in poverty, women's empowerment, children and youth education, and health care of the elderly and frail.

Some of these projects, especially in India and Brazil, are in the process of implementing and reporting. Thus, they will finish in December 2023. The reports received to date, collected up to last April, are accompanied by abundant photographic material and documents. All point to the vitality of the projects and commitment to our CSJ focus as defined by the Global Missionary Fund.

On the one hand, new and stringent accounting



San Ramon, Bolivia: Health Prevention program



Ashta, India: Income-generating project

requirements force us to devote much more energy to reporting activities. On the other hand, they prove to be an important tool for future planning as we reflect on achievements and share the obtained results.

Despite the fragile realities of the Congregation, especially in certain geographical areas such as Europe or Brazil, the planning effort of the provincial councils and the reporting work of the sisters has produced growth, so much so that we have gone from a few projects to the current number.

From the collected reports, a picture of the various activities emerges. As we look at the results and some of the difficulties encountered,

and consider all the joy and enthusiasm of working for a common purpose—there is an awareness that the testimony of the Gospel is above everything. We might call this a “contagion” of love, in service to others, especially the least and poorest.

In fact, the actions carried out express care for the “dear neighbor”. This impulse moves sisters and lay collaborators to be on the side of those living in poverty. The actions invite us to seek dialogue and friendship between peoples, cultures and religions as part of an ongoing journey of reconciliation and “integral” conversion of mind, heart and spirit.

For this reason, the International Finance

Commission, in collaboration with the General Council is thinking of a possible digital publication of the results of these projects to highlight the wonderful work our resources accomplish. The IFC may implement this plan at the beginning of 2024. Such a publication might encourage a reworking of the Provinces, Regions and Missions budgets to express more concretely the missionary spirit and generosity of the Congregation. Indeed, it is a blessing to have the Global Missionary Fund. The Fund encourages us to live the Charism and achieve the decisions and goals of past and future General Chapters, always with greatest attention to those in need.

A PROJECT THAT EMPOWERS

Sr. Santina Smiderle CSJ

Bolivia



With the help of the “Global Missionary Fund” of the Association of the Love of God, we, Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry, of the Region of Bolivia, in the Community of Magdalena-Beni, decided to do something for the women who

are widows or those who live alone, having been abandoned by their companions and who, due to circumstances of life and poverty, take on the role of mother and father, and are constantly struggling to educate their children and raise their family.

In 2020, we launched the project: “Living with Dignity – Beginning an Income Generation Project for Women”. Due to the pandemic, we were able to actualize it only in 2022. The aim of the project was “To give initial financial support and



assistance to the women of Magdalena who want to start a small business so they might improve their family income and live with dignity”.

Ten women presented their proposal and organized their family group with the participation of the mother, daughters, daughters-in-law and granddaughters with a total of 33 women, working together to produce and sell homemade food. The 10 groups continue to function, some working daily and others according to their possibilities. They all seek to maintain their capital for the continuity and future expansion of their businesses.

With the name “Women Entrepreneurs”, the groups meet monthly to share experiences, reflect and evaluate the results of the groups and support each

other in difficulties, in light of continuity, growth and sustainability.

From this first group, a second was born: “Women – Manual Entrepreneurs”, with the participation of other women from the community. This group meets weekly to knit, embroider, sew and paint, with the help of volunteer instructors from the community.

The two groups dream of forming an “Association of Itonamas Women”, with legal status, which will allow them to raise money for their organization and activities and find a space in the Cultural Centre of the City, to exhibit and sell their products.

“Empowerment is the process by which people strengthen their capabilities, confidence, vision and leadership as a group.

Empowering women is helping them to gain power, recognition and the ability to stop being disadvantaged.”

We believe that this is the process that the women in our groups are going through. Following are a few comments of those involved in the project: “Everything we learn is important, good and serves us a lot”; “In the crisis we are in, selling is a means of buying other foodstuffs”; “Doing the job guarantees having money”; “Prayer and listening to the Word helps us move forward”; “The group is a space for encouragement, support and mutual help”; “In my disability, work helps me; I always have an income”; “When things are difficult, we start to laugh and get distracted”; “I thank God for being here”; “We want to learn and move forward”; “We are in a difficult situation, we have to move forward for our children”; “We support and help each other”; “If something is wrong, we try to help each other”; “If there was no such help, there would be no daily food, medicine and no money”.

The interest in the Project exceeded expectations. We will continue with initiatives that contribute to developing the inner strength that empowers our women, facilitates the defence of human dignity and helps everyone to have LIFE in abundance.

EXPERIENCES AT A UN CONFERENCE IN PARIS

Helga Haas-Maennle

Norway



At the end of May this year, delegations from all UN member states met in Paris to negotiate how to deal with plastic pollution. If no action is taken now, plastic production will double within 20 years and plastic waste that ends up in the sea will triple in the same period.

The delegates have only a scant two years to create a 'legally binding instrument' to be ratified by the UN General Assembly in the winter of 2024. The meeting in Paris was the second in a series of five: called the INC (Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee, with INC-2, the second meeting, held in Paris). As is customary in the UN, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are allowed to participate as observers who can also express their views according to established rules.

I, an associate in Norway and their JPIC contact person, was asked to travel to Paris as the delegate of the Congregations of St. Joseph, our UN-NGO. It

was incredibly interesting to experience such a large gathering with such different interests and viewpoints trying to find ways to agree.

The conference opened with a video message by President Emmanuel Macron. That first evening, the French state hosted a reception with delicious finger food and drinks, where I got to meet the delegation from Austria and received useful information

about the conference process. That evening I was accompanied by Sr. Jeannette Londadjim CSJ from a community in Paris.

Only half of the 3,000 registered delegates could be present at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris due to space limitations. While this caused dissatisfaction among many NGOs, it was not a problem for us, since sr. Jeannette, who was



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

also registered, could not participate in most meetings. I was welcomed by her community, in the middle of Paris and an hour's walk from UNESCO. Only once did I have enough time to go on foot to admire Paris' great sights.

Otherwise, it was just a matter of following the conference every day. During a short conversation with the head of the Norwegian delegation, Sverre T. Jahre, I heard that such a process under the auspices of the UN was a first; there was no blueprint. It was completely new for all those involved. As a result, no one could point the way to a good and thorough possible solution, which was quickly evident.

An huge stumbling block appeared at the very beginning. Several countries

would not approve the rules of procedure which stated that a 2/3 majority would be decisive when consensus could not be found. It took a full three (out of five!) days of hard and tough discussions before the delegates found a compromise.

Norway had a special role in this conference. The Norwegian state has provided large financial resources to carry out the entire INC process. As an observer from Norway, I met many governmental and non-governmental delegates and was always well received. Many pointed out their gratitude for Norway's role in the process.

It was incredibly exciting and rewarding to have been a participant in the conference which really opened my eyes to the issue of plastic

pollution. During the lunch break, seminars were organized to give more insight into the problem. Particularly exciting was a short lecture by Swedish Therese M. Karlsson from IPEN (International Pollutants Elimination Network) about how a circular economy for plastics could be built up.

There are many good ideas and technological solutions are being worked on to get rid of plastic pollution. Let's put our shoulders to the wheel, because it is of the utmost importance for our environment that the states agree to a legally binding instrument. I sincerely wish the delegates the best of luck for the road ahead at INC-3 in Nairobi, Kenya, in November and next year in Canada and South Korea (INC-4 and INC-5).

NEW SAINTS

Sr. Joan Barnes	94	Ireland	05.05.2023
Sr. Jeanne Hope	89	USA	02.07.2023
Sr. Teresinha Biasi	97	Brazil	24.07.2023
Sr. Anna Boledi	101	Italy	06.08.2023
Sr. Helena Toalado	106	Brazil	09.08.2023
Sr. Teresinha Reginato	84	Brazil	10.08.2023
Sr. Maristella Marinato	100	Italy	20.08.2023
Sr. Gelsemina Geocometti	96	Brazil	21.08.2023
Sr. Francoise Theodore L.	96	Fr-Belg.	21.08.2023
Sr. Natalicia Zago	93	Brazil	24.08.2023

SERVING A NEGLECTED ITINERANT COMMUNITY

Sr. Shakila CSJ

Pakistan



The Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry is the only women's congregation in Pakistan to initiate a school for gypsies. Pakistan's itinerant communities, commonly known as Gypsies, Khana Badosh or Pakhi live in temporary tents and camps on the outskirts of the big cities. Gypsies are a sector of society considered to have no religion, no identification. Excluded from society and often migrating in search of available work, gypsies set up their tents wherever they can: near landfills, by roadsides, along polluted streams. District Municipal Corporation often dumps solid waste next to their dwellings or demolishes their tents in anti-encroachment operations. Space is shrinking for them, as the owners of plots occupied by migrant



gypsies are kicking them out and securing their assets.

As Josephites we are inspired by our founder Father Medaille to reach out to the peripheries and help the people living on the margins of society. As we read the signs of the times and respond to such needs we become the Good News.

In 2010 S. Shakila Bhatti founded the Soar

Primary School for gypsies living in tents. The school also began in a small tent made of bamboo with a tarpaulin on the ground, often soaked with drain water.

With 82 students at present, Soar Primary School caters to those who come mostly from families of beggars, day laborers, garbage collectors, sanitary workers and singers-dancers (a



profession that is considered immoral in an Islamic country). Like other non-formal schools, Soar Primary School adopts a multigrade teaching method by teaching a unified syllabus to students from grade one to grade five and having teenagers in another separate class.

St. Joseph Associate Perwaiz Masih manages the facility while I incarnate our charism of communion by spending quality time visiting the students, listening to the challenges of their parents, occasionally offering them ration bags and gently guiding them toward better life choices.

On Sundays, with the help of associate Peviaz, we teach basic catechism as a way to impart moral values to sustain life. It's a major challenge to convince them to be educated because their identity is strongly rooted in

their culture.

There is an urgent need to serve those for whom nobody cares. Missionaries arrived here to serve the downtrodden and the Church is known for imparting quality



education and healthcare. Sadly, both education and medical services have become businesses. Most village-based Catholic Schools and Hostels have either closed or

are surviving on a ventilator. We are called for service – not business.

Every person is created in the image of God and their children have the right to know their faith and get an education.

Only education and skills will shape their future. With God's grace and the availability of the associates our Soar Primary School for the Gypsies is building the future of youth who are rejected and feel isolated in the society. We count on St. Joseph, the tireless worker,

to always be the motive for us to live communion and the spirituality of littleness, thus being a tangible Church.

SISTERS ALL (SORELLE TUTTE)

Sr. Maria Giovanna Titone CSJ

Italy



The book “Sorelle tutte. Nello Stato teocratico dell’Iran” (Sisters All: In the Theocratic State of Iran) was born with the desire to give voice to the protests of Iranian women, occasioned by the killing of Mahsa Amini by the morality police force. Her crime was not wearing the hijab in compliance with moral norms. This book aims to draw the attention of people to the condition of women in countries like Iran and awaken Catholic conscience to the urgency of living the Gospel and becoming the voice of those whose voice is taken away by the arrogance of the powerful of this world.

Striking women today means denying a future and education to a country, a people, and a community.

Personally, the news of Mahsa’s death struck me like a slap in the face, but more deeply I was hurt by the indifference that the international community is showing towards what is happening in Iran.

I have decided to take



the side of these women and these people because I believe that this too is announcing the Gospel: giving voice to those whose voice world takes away! Liberating the oppressed!

In my view, Iranian women have the force of prophecy, of those who do

not resign themselves to an inherited system, but have the audacity to demand change in the system in order to build a future for those who come after them. We too can be touched by this wind of prophecy!

CALL TO THE CONGREGATION – ONE TREE – ONE LIFE

Sr. Jona Chinnappan CSJ

France/Belgium



The Congregation's JPIC Commission made an important appeal to all the members through the "One Tree - One Life" campaign to promote awareness of the situation of women in the Theocratic Republic of Iran.

The Congregation has requested all the JPIC contact persons to play a key role in explaining this campaign to our communities, institutions, lay associate groups, friends

and parishes. In addition, each Sister responsible for JPIC in her Province, Region or Mission will accompany the campaign and collect the feedback of all those who wish to participate in this initiative to plant trees in memory of the victims in Iran.

To respond to this call, the Province of France/Belgium and the Biollay parish organized the planting of 4 trees in the garden of Bellecombette.

On Sunday, June 11th

2023, the parish of Biollay, of which we are a part, organized a parish outing in conjunction with the Sisters of St. Joseph around the theme "One tree - One life". One hundred and fifty people gathered for an open-air Mass to celebrate the Feast of Corpus Christi. We were lucky to have good weather. Our Eucharistic celebration began with a meditation on nature, becoming aware of



our five senses and touching Mother Earth with our feet and hands. It was amazing to see everyone gathered together around a tree. We then entered the tent in a procession with lit candles. The saplings were carried by the faithful and planted in the afternoon.

Before the planting, the group visited our historic houses and the Hall of Memories. This was followed by the planting of four trees.

We felt that it was the perfect moment to bring awareness of “One Tree – One Life” to the 70 parishioners present. Thus a group of sisters prepared a skit entitled “Mother Earth”. Through this sketch we were invited, together with the Christian community, to become aware of the situation in Iran, to support the Iranian people and show our solidarity with the families of the victims. We want to shine a light on and honour each person who tried



to restore human dignity but was killed in the protests and / or treated unfairly.

After this collective commitment, along with the parishioners, we divided ourselves into 4 groups to plant 4 trees as symbols of life. We planted a loquat, a peach

tree and two plum trees. This planting invited us to celebrate by dancing around these 4 trees. This dance meant that every tree has roots whereas we do not. On the other hand, we have brothers and sisters on whom we can rely for our growth.

EDITING

Sr. Barbara Bozak
Sr. Eliana Aparecida dos Santos

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Sr. Laveena D'Souza

TRANSLATIONS

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

CIRCULATION

Monica Bianchini
www.csjchambery.org

E - MAIL

icc@csjchambery.org