

French

**English**

Italian

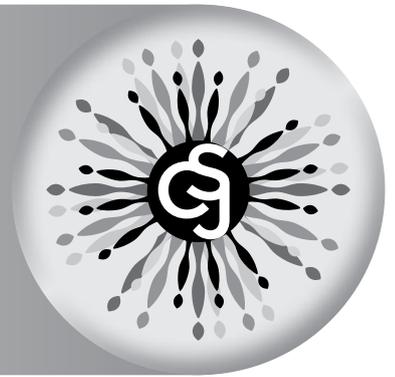
Portuguese

Norwegian

# CS JOURNAL

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry

May - June • Year 2013 - n. 3



## GENERAL COUNCIL



*Sisters Sally and Philo with the Sisters participating in the workshop*

# Driven by Love to Create a Preferred Future

**Sr. Sally Hodgdon**

*Superior General*

The last week of May and the first half of June found me in India with Sister Philomena. We not only participated in two provincial chapters but we also conducted a two-day workshop for sisters from all four provinces who are working with the Temporary Professed. The themes of the two chapters helped to shape my thoughts during that time. The theme of the Pachmarhi chapter was “Driven by

the Love of God into the Heart of the World in Mission” and that of Tanmaya, “Christocentric Life for Community and Prophetic Witness.”

During these three weeks I reflected on the components of being “driven” by the intensity of God’s love which allows us to live the vision of Jesus. Our sisters were focused on God’s love as the source, passion, and energy which invites and allows us to freely choose to move forward in meeting today’s unmet needs. To do so requires taking stands that are unpopular but prophetic

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in a world suffering from inequities caused by the desire for wealth and power, a lack of respect for human life, and intolerance for another's religious beliefs. The call to analyze our reality in light of Jesus' vision demands that we examine, through the perspective of the three evangelical counsels of Justice, Freedom and Love, the neighborhoods and societies in which we are a presence. Such an analysis is most authentic if it comes from deep personal prayer and intimacy with God which allows us to see reality as God sees it.

These weeks were an experience of listening to and sharing on the themes of both Chapters, leading an intense workshop on the sacrifice involved in, as well as the need for, a stronger and

well integrated program for temporary professed whose hearts are wide open to God. Clearly it is vision, passion and mission which envelop all of these events. But a question for all of us is how much are we willing to sacrifice to live the vision of Christ from the depth of our passion? Will we allow ourselves to move deeper into the heart of the "unchurched" or "untouched" areas of our global reality, sacrificing our current ministry and/or our status within the local society and church? Will we sacrifice our personal time, desires and possibly some ministries to be graced companions to our temporary professed and demand that they assume greater responsibility for their integrated development and for our mission? Are we willing to be generative knowing

that it is often leaders who create new leaders? Will we make space and reach out to those among us who are lonely? All of us wonder about our future and where God is leading us to be present as a congregation. Our congregational global reality is very diverse in age and culture but often in each of our countries the unmet needs of the young, the old and the poor are very similar. All of them need respect, human contact, education, nutrition, wellness and fulfillment. How can we meet these needs with new enthusiasm and hope? Where are the most urgent needs calling us to be present? It will only be through our prayerful reflection and courageous sacrifice that we will clearly see and follow God's lead into a preferred future.

## WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

# A Gift in the Service of Life

**Sr. Santina Balduino Cella**  
*Province of Paraná, Brazil*

Life always has amazing surprises in store for us and always gives us challenging opportunities to develop our gifts and abilities and put them at the service of life, justice and peace. During many years of my life as a Sister of Saint Joseph, I tried to take on the mission that was entrusted to me with much love and dedication. I have lived in many communities, serving my sisters and the people in my mission as a cook. I made the kitchen, sink, and stove, my altar; there I prepared the Eucharistic liturgy, and, at the end of the afternoon, I have the grace of

celebrating with my sisters. In this journey, I became interested in the discovery of healing through the plants that God has wisely placed in nature. As a gift from God, I received a book on this subject, and I started to make some ointments, teas, syrups, herbal extracts, etc. I was experimenting on myself and then offering these remedies to my sisters and people who were crossing my path and who spoke of their pain and suffering. They were often discouraged and losing hope that one day they might be healed of their infirmities. Today, after many years, I have the joy of saying that the discovery of this gift has brought much joy and gratitude for the wonders produced through the



*Sister Santina in her pharmacy*

remedies present in nature. In this experience, there have been many exciting testimonials from people who have been cured and who come back to say how grateful they are. A gesture of love, a moment dedicated to the cultivation of herbs, a word of encouragement, a time for making ointments and syrups provides the certainty that God uses fragile and small instruments to make a difference, creating more life, justice and peace.

# Caring for the Environment

Sr. Ceverina Cadore

Province of Lagoa Vermelha, Brazil

Facing this challenge and living in a world marked by violence, injustice and constant threats to life, I have tried to seek strength by participating in the Caritas network that promotes and strengthens worldwide solidarity actions. "Caritas" has had a long journey, always being attentive to the challenges of building a world of peace and justice. It is like a large family of various colors, races, ethnicities and genders, connected by the desire to contribute so that all can be a part of Brazilian and world society. We nourish the dream, working collectively to reach a day when we will all be participating in the grand banquet of life. One of the activities is the care of our common home, "planet Earth," in a non-negotiable struggle against the pollution of rivers, lakes, streams, deforestation and the unbridled production of trash thrown about in the environment. As a group of women and men, aware that the planet is being devastated by humans, we began a project in Tomba, Feira de Santana, Bahia, in the northeastern region of Brazil, in partnership with three universities,

to propose a new relationship with nature. To take the first step, we joined forces with those who collect recyclable material and who, in their day to day life, without any resources or without equipment, manage their livelihood and take care of the environment. Our mission is to promote training through regular meetings, using music, theatre, dynamic interactions, fiestas and the sharing of food. These moments allow for the exchange of knowledge, the cultivation of esteem and appreciation of the great work that these collectors are performing in the world. The second step was taken through the organization of the Association of Collectors. For this group the State of Bahia has made a public area available for the installation of the needed equipment: presses, scales, forklifts,



Caritas group and environmental workers

**"SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH, CHALLENGED TODAY TO RESPOND WITH HOPE AND LIFE TO THE URGENCIES OF THE PLANET." (GC/2009)**



Sister Ceverina with some recyclable materials collectors

carts and other features that enhance the work of the Association. Now, we have the important task of motivating the workers and adding to their number, so they might achieve recognition by the public authorities and enjoy the rights of Brazilian citizens. It is true that things do not change quickly. However, in some people we already see a growth in self-esteem and, most significantly, a feeling of pride to be collaborating in the care of the environment. They have become supportive and believe in the power of an organized group.

I admit that participating in this initiative gives me the certainty that I am in tune with Father Médaille who dreamed of world unity and the inclusion of those who do not have a place or voice. The word of God enlightens me, and Jesus Christ guides me in his project of justice and peace. Being part of the Caritas network is an opportunity to contribute by doing good and not giving up, ever. As Dom Helder Câmara said, in his final message, "Don't let Prophecy die out."

# Sister Alirce: A Life of Love and Giving



Sr. Alirce

**Sr. Ivani Maria Gandini**  
*Province of Porto Alegre, Brazil*

Seeking concrete actions and security measures for the people who live on the edge of Highway BR-392 in Rio Grande, in the extreme south of Brazil, the Sisters of Saint Joseph and some leaders of the Diocese, along with other people, held the “March for Life,” on April 26, 2013. This event brought together some 200 people, who, praying and singing, wearing white tee shirts and carrying posters, banners and crosses, remembered the victims of accidents that have occurred along this road. It was a peaceful gesture that disrupted highway traffic for about 30 minutes and spanned 10 miles. In addition, the Province of Porto Alegre, Associates, parishes, friends and collaborators signed a petition which will be delivered to the competent authorities, asking for more security and traffic lights for the population living in the vicinity of the BR-392.

As a result of regional development that has led to the doubling of the highway without any concern for the life that surrounds it, carelessness, high speed and the disrespect of the drivers

have caused many casualties. Along this route, there are several stretches of urban perimeter without lighting or security, walkways, speed monitoring or other type of signaling. It was there that, in the space of four days, there were three deaths, including that of our dear Sister Alirce Paulina Frigotto Zanella. Sister Alirce, as part of her responsibilities in the Province, traveled to Porto Alegre and other locations. On April 16, 2013, after two days of meetings and work, and at the end of a trip home to her community, she got off the bus in Santa Rosa. She had to cross two lanes of the road, but at the end of the first, she was struck by a car, causing instant death. The news spread quickly, causing great sorrow for the Sisters, the families, all the people who knew her and the people of the region, who had seen three victims in just four days. After all the legal and bureaucratic procedures, her body was moved to Porto Alegre. The accolades and farewells took place in the São Luiz

community, during the evening and early morning of April 18. Never had seen so many people been seen at a funeral of an other Sister! Ten priests, including a nephew and a cousin, concelebrated the Eucharist of Thanksgiving and consigned Sister Alirce to the hands of God. During her 46 years of religious life, Sister Alirce was a teacher in different towns, Provincial Councilor, mistress of novices and Provincial Superior in Porto Alegre (2008-2012). In 2013, among other social and parish pastoral activities in Santa Rosa, in Rio Grande, she was nominated by the Province to participate in the activities and studies concerning the integration of the provinces and regions of Brazil/Bolivia. Always very dedicated, responsible and committed to her work, she sought to give attention to and build communion among the Sisters and with all the people, teachers and staff, where she worked. Even in her death, she managed to bring many together to effect change for the good of the people where she was in ministry.



*Shutting down the highway*

# Nuns on the Bus

Sr. Elaine Betoncourt

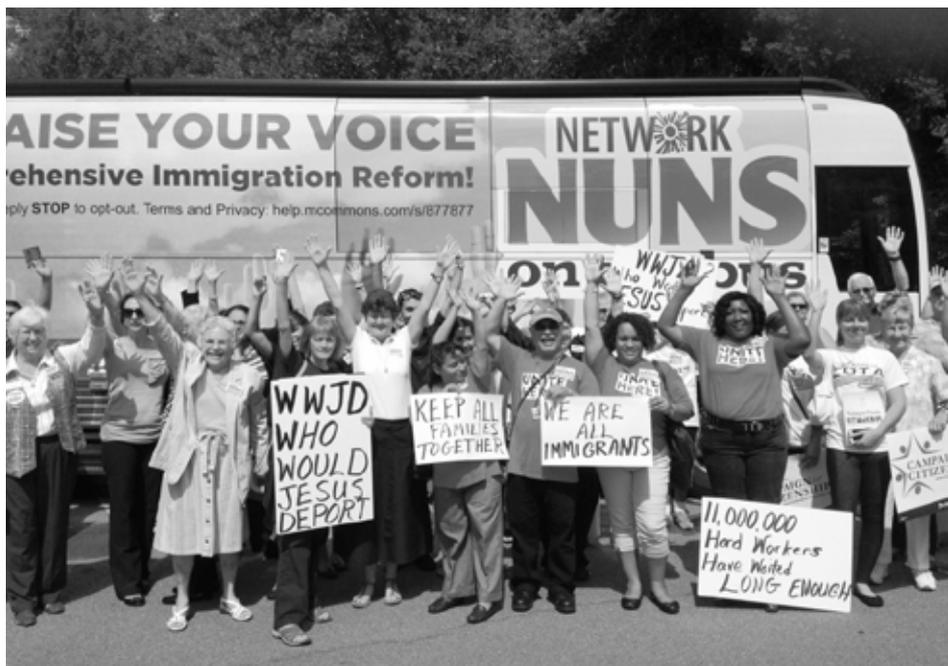
USA

What a privilege and joy it has been to be one of the Nuns on the Bus for Immigration Reform! People are very glad to see us when we arrive and we hear many words of gratitude for what we are doing. The visual sign of Nuns on the Bus has captivated the hearts of people and the Nuns on the Bus enkindle their hope. From May 28 to June 18, 2013 the Nuns were riding along the eastern, southern and western borders of the U.S. stopping in 15 states, 40 cities and 54 sites to raise awareness about our broken immigration system and the need for Immigration Reform. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to do the entire route, 6,500 miles (14,300 km.) from New Haven, CT in the northeast to San Francisco, CA on the west coast. TV cameras and news reporters met

## Why “Nuns on the Bus”?

Sr. Ann Kane (USA)

In 2012 Nuns on the Bus was the response of American women religious to the need for a fair and faithful budget, rather than that proposed by some powerful politicians that would have had a negative impact on those living in poverty while protecting the interests of the wealthy. American women religious literally travelled on a bus from state to state, meeting with politicians and raising awareness of the issues, thus having a positive impact on the outcome. Again in 2013, women religious, realizing that they had the power to influence the legislative process, went back on the bus to address the issue of comprehensive immigration reform.



A crowd of supporters greets the Nuns on the Bus

us at each stop. This was important to not only get out the message that the people want common sense immigration reform now, but also to tell the stories of immigrants who are suffering terribly under our present system.

Sister Simone Campbell SSS, the Executive Director of Network, a Catholic Social Justice Lobby founded by Catholic Sisters in 1972 in Washington, D.C., is the leader and principal spokesperson for the group. In 2012 Network organized the first Nuns on the Bus trip through the middle of the country, to raise support for a fair and faithful national budget and now in 2013 they were on the road to call for just and comprehensive immigration reform. As we traveled we heard stories of immigrants who live in daily fear, fear of being separated from their families, fear of domestic violence, fear of deportation. We personally met immigrants who have been preyed upon by fraudulent notaries, persons promising a way to get legal papers but instead repeatedly stealing their money. We have also seen firsthand the wonderful work that so many throughout our country, especially Catholic Sisters

and their colleagues, are doing to assist undocumented immigrants, offering all sorts of protective services and educational opportunities. Visits to the offices of U.S. Senators and Congressmen have been productive ways to give voice to our cause. Also at each gathering we distributed cards for people to sign that attest to their support for immigration reform and after the road trip Network will present these cards to the legislators as a sign of the people's desire. In addition, we have urged everyone to call their legislators and express the need for immigration reform. We are hopeful that this effort will help motivate the U.S. Congress to open a pathway to citizenship for immigrants who want to pursue the American dream and create a better future for themselves and their children. President Barack Obama expressed his support and gratitude for Nuns on the Bus by inviting Sr. Simone to the White House for a private meeting in the Oval Office on May 30th. He is ready to sign a bipartisan bill when it comes to his desk. We, Nuns on the Bus, stand with our bishops, our president, and all who support comprehensive Immigration Reform.

# The Challenge of Making an Organic Vegetable Garden

Sr. Adelide Canci

*Province of Lagoa Vermelha, Brazil*

In 2007, we made a statement as a Congregational Body on the care and preservation of nature. In Brazil, it was emphasized and included in our mission and works. Here, we have an account of what happened at the Hospital Nossa Senhora da Oliveira in Vacaria, in southern Brazil, where two employees who work in the vegetable garden felt challenged and had a change of attitude.

“We, Luís Carlos Nunes Gonsalves, 45, and Francisca dos Santos Silva, 45, who work with the Sisters of Saint Joseph in the vegetable garden of the Hospital Nossa Senhora da Oliveira, began to ask ourselves, ‘What can we do, as workers who cultivate the vegetable garden and orchard and who are in charge of collecting the garbage from the kitchen?’ We were in the middle of nature and had resources at hand, but we didn’t know quite what to do with them until the day when Sisters Noeli Rossi, a nurse, and Adelide Canci, the Director, challenged us to transform our vegetable garden into an organic one. This, at first, caused us fear and insecurity. We talked and we decided to accept the challenge, inviting Sister Noeli to advise us. And, so, we started a new process, eliminating everything chemical and using exclusively environmentally friendly and organic products. What hurts nature was removed and what can nourish it was buried and transformed and came back into the earth: the leaves of the crops, as well as the husks and pits that are not suitable for human consumption. We exclude pesticides and combat pests and diseases with natural defenses. Nature itself teaches us and gives us



*Employees and Sister Noeli with the fruits of the earth*

the capabilities to assist in the healthy development of what we plant. Currently we cultivate the vegetable garden where we harvest vegetables, and an orchard, where and soon we will harvest fruit, to serve patients, family members and employees who take their meals at the Hospital. We were surprised by the quantity and quality of the products that we harvest. For us, who put the seed in the ground and see it grow, it is a celebration, as day after day it grows and in a few weeks is ready for the table. Whoever eats what we cultivate praises us and wants to know how the produce can be of good quality without chemicals.

Today, we are happy and fulfilled in what we do, because we help preserve nature and also care for the life and health of humans. We are not doctors, but we are specialists in what we do, because we studied and learned how to cultivate and promote more life without using pesticides. Every time we pick a basket of produce and take it to the kitchen, we feel that we are finding life, bringing it to anyone who needs more health

and dignity. People look at us and see us as professionals who know how to grow and care for the earth. So we are putting our knowledge into practice; we know what we are doing and why we are doing it.

We believe that we are walking the right path, because the care of nature leads to a healthier planet and a better quality of life. If God, who is the author of life, did not create pesticides or chemicals, we should also avoid them. So we work and take care of the garden and the orchard, reading the signs of nature and saying, ‘What do you want to tell us with these changes? Why is nature reacting like this?’ We learn to be sensitive to the changes of nature and realize what is happening. We are no longer threatening nature, but rather giving what is necessary for her to return healthy and good quality products to us. We have discovered the value and meaning of life, so we do what we do with responsibility, affection and respect. We are caretakers of life and nature thanks us every day, giving us the best of what it can produce.”

# Living the Charism for more than 75 years

Sr. Celina Trombi  
Italy

“The charism of communion” is a great gift at 102 years of age and 77 years of religious consecration! I live the charism of communion with passion and loyalty in my daily encounter with Jesus and my community. The charism of communion of the Sisters of Saint Joseph is a great gift that has permeated my entire life. Still, I want to join with all the Sisters who work on the various continents. With them, I am a small missionary who unites with them with prayer and love. I spend my long days in the infirmary, where knitting, I prepare items to be offered on various occasions to Sisters, to friends ... To all those who approach



Sister Celina celebrating 100 years

me, I give a smile and speak a word of encouragement when they need it in their moments of discouragement. The charism of communion was and is for me a great grace that gives me courage to go forward, to do the will of God and to

give a good example to the Sisters and all those who pass by. The Lord is faithful and helps us live with fidelity, courage and love. It is the Lord Jesus alone who will one day grant us to live the fullness of our charism of communion.

## NEW SAINTS

Sr. Katharina Brockschmidt (82)	Denmark	19/04/2013
Sr. Giorgina Iaboni (96)	Italy	24/04/2013
Sr. Maria Romana Colasanti (95)	Italy	24/04/2013
Sr. Marie Christiane Porral (91)	France	01/05/2013
Sr. Marie Colette Terrier (92)	France	06/05/2013
Sr. Polonia Armiliato (76)	Caxias do Sul	21/05/2013
Sr. Marie Xavier Bouvier (91)	France	22/05/2013
Sr. Alexandrina Alves Dos Santos (97)	São Paulo	14/06/2013
Sr. Rosalinda Guidolin (94)	Porto Alegre	16/06/2013

### NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Since the Extended Council will be held in October-

November 2013, it will not be possible to publish the CSJournal according to our normal schedule. Thus in the second half of the

year, we will publish two issues (**July-August-September** and **October-November-December**) instead of the usual three.

# Living Médaille's Vision in Stockholm

**Catarina Andersson**  
*Associate (Sweden)*

I am part of a small group of associates of the Sisters of St. Joseph living in Stockholm. As there are no longer any Sisters of St. Joseph in Stockholm, we are connected with the Danish Province since some of the sisters who were here in Stockholm earlier went to Denmark when they left Sweden. Some of our group have been associates for many years and have been gathering from the time the Sisters still were living in Stockholm, while others, like me, are new members, part of the group for only one year. In Stockholm we are a group of only five, but others have shown interest and some of them participate in our meetings which are held once a month. We have been reading chapters from the course on Jean-Pierre Médaille and the Eucharistic Letter which Rosemary O'Toole of Canada has published online. Father Morgan, a diocesan priest in Stockholm parish, is our facilitator. He prepares a short talk after which we speak freely about the text and what it means to us in our daily lives. The members of our group give service in various ways in different parishes, some in the cathedral and others in parishes in the northern part of Stockholm. My commitment is singing in the choir – I love to sing, it connects me to Jesus Christ in a very special



*Father Morgan, S. Susanne Hoyos, Catarina Andersson and S. Lila Bork at Catarina's commitment*

way. In fact most of the associates are members of the Cathedral Choir and that is how we got to know each other and the spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Once a year we visit Denmark, and once a year Sr. Susanne Hoyos, who is responsible for our little group, visits us in Sweden. When she is present with us in Stockholm we renew our commitment as associates and this year I committed myself for the next 3 years. I promised in front of God, the sisters and all who were there that I will try and imitate Jesus Christ by acknowledging him in anyone, and try to treat all people like Jesus did, in the Spirit and according to the Charism of the Sisters of Saint

Joseph. This year we were happy that two of the three sisters who live in Sundsvall (a 5-hour drive north of Stockholm) also spent some time with us and participated in the Mass and festivities afterward. Their presence was very meaningful and made it a really big celebration for us. When we meet in Denmark, we gather with two other groups of associates for a day of retreat. This coming together and sharing is very life-giving for us. It helps us feel connected to the Sisters and the whole family of associates. And it also gives us time to meet with the Sisters in the Danish province and re-connect with those who ministered in Sweden for many years.

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