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English

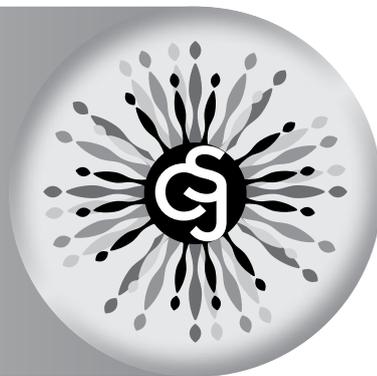
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CS JOURNAL

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry
January - February • Year 2014 - n. 1



GENERAL COUNCIL

Internationality: Poverty or Wealth?



Sisters from Bolivia, Norway and Pakistan share information at the Extended Council

Sister Ieda Maria Tomazini

General Council

At the Enlarged Council of our Congregation, held last October in Brazil, we reflected on moving forward as one body in our diversity. We, Sister representatives of various nationalities: the United States, Bolivia, Brazil, Italy, France, Ireland, Norway, Denmark, India, and Pakistan, expressed the joy of belonging to an International Congregation. At the same time we were sorry we couldn't communicate adequately, because

we haven't adopted the use of a common language to be spoken in our congregation. This occurs in all international events. What would we do, on these occasions, without the help of translators? However, internationality presents problems not only regarding communication. What can we say about the food, clothing and variations in climate? How to measure understanding with such different levels

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International meeting of the Finance Committee of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry

of knowledge and cultural references? Soon after the Enlarged Council, we had a training session for communications in India, where 24 Sisters of 4 different nationalities participated: Brazil, the United States, Italy and India. The meeting was a spectacular success, but so much work! Presenters needed to prepare the content in a language understandable to all: English. The participants strove to articulate this language with that spoken in their states or regions of India, because there are a myriad of languages and dialects among the Indian Sisters. English is not the native tongue for most of them. And the cooks were always attentive to prepare food for the foreigners, avoiding strong spicy seasonings, characteristic of the country. There was much concern given to assure that all would feel and be well. Another concern was the safety of those who came, stayed in the country and then departed, since they might run risks because of the internationality. This year, in our General House in Rome, two international events took place. One was a meeting of the Finance Committee, with representatives from five countries, and another was a LAC meeting, in which the General Councils of the

congregations of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Lyon, Annecy and Chambéry participated. The concerns regarding these meetings are the same: lodging, meals, transportation, translation, cultural understanding, and common planning. And, even recognizing the difficulties, we keep saying that living in an International Congregation is valuable.

We could also mention our project with the Sisters of Saint Joseph of China, who are receiving formation in the Province of Italy, as well as our

young Vietnamese Sisters, who form community with the Sisters in Norway. Similarly, we could talk about our international communities in Tanzania, Mozambique, Italy, Czech Republic, France, and Bolivia. It's not so simple to put everything in common, but it is an evangelical sign and a witness to the fact that it is possible to live in community, in spite of our differences of color, race, creed, and culture. Internationality, while fascinating, is a challenge to our ability to be creative, to open ourselves up to the different and to differences, to grow in understanding and tolerance. It tests our truths, our beliefs, and our religious and moral ideas. It makes us go forward and makes us more humble, because getting lost in translation make us more mature and more flexible. It requires us to be open, to accommodate and respect the culture of others and to have the ability to acknowledge that none is better or worse. All are different and require a frank dialogue grounded in values, so that one cultural lifestyle does not overwhelm another. Internationality is not poverty or wealth. Internationality is a blessing if shared maturely and respectfully, when the goals are growth and the search for the common good.



Sisters from Brazil, Denmark, Italy and France/India sharing in table conversation at the Extended Council

Seeds of Love and Hope

Sister Ivani Maria Gandini
Province of Porto Alegre, Brazil

The Sisters of Saint Joseph arrived in Rio Grande do Sul, southern Brazil, on December 23, 1898. And in March 17, 1963 the Province of Porto Alegre was founded, for a significant historical reason, “the growing number of Sisters and works in the Province of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Rio Grande do Sul, with headquarters in Garibaldi, triggered the need to form two Provinces, in order to better serve the life and mission of the Sisters”.



Festive celebration of 50 years of the province

The great celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Province of Porto Alegre was held on November 17, 2013. It was a moment of thanksgiving with the presence of the majority of the Sisters of the Province, Associates, and representatives from other Provinces, children, youth, adults, employees and volunteers who participate in the life and mission of the Province, social projects or in the ecclesial communities. Saint Joseph’s family is quite broad and reaches the whole world. We could see on this day the impact that the charism of unity has in society, in the Church, and in the world. Seeds of love and hope were released and, in time, will spring up and grow, bringing forth people, educators, community leaders from the people and from families. The number of vocations to the religious life of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry in southern Brazil has been great since the early days of our arrival on this soil. The Church, through its bishops and priests, were asking for the presence

of the Sisters of Saint Joseph for the education of children and youth, for the care of the sick and for parish, catechetical, and pastoral work. Thus, communities were opened and, after a few years, the mission became the Province of Garibaldi. Vocations come from everywhere, and it was necessary to expand buildings or build new ones.

In the 1960s, with nearly a thousand Sisters, it was almost impossible for the Provincial Council to meet all the requirements and challenges of the time. So in 1963, after prayer, reflection and discussion, the General Council accepted the request to form an additional Province, that of Porto Alegre. At the time, the Sisters served in



Festive celebration of 50 years of the province

schools, hospitals, kindergartens, asylums, orphanages, boarding schools and parishes. However, with much effort and struggle, overcoming difficulties, and reaching new achievements, the Province of Porto Alegre, since its dismemberment from Garibaldi, organized itself in order to encourage dialogue and the participation of the Sisters and to respond to the calls of the Church and the needs of the people. For over 50 years, the Sisters have been working on different mission fronts, education, health, family, parish and pastoral leadership, training of women, and social and other activities for the defense and promotion of life. Also, the life and mission of the Sisters of Saint

Joseph grew and became more vibrant with the engagement of men and women living our spirituality and Charism. To celebrate 350 years of the Congregation and the Year 2000, the Province became the seat of the Interprovincial Novitiate of Brazil. The life of the Province and each member was and is continuously nourished by prayer, contemplation, reading, community meetings, participation in the Eucharist and being 'bread broken and shared.'

It is interesting to note that, 50 years after the formation of the Province of Porto Alegre, the Provinces and the North/Northeast Region of Brazil are conducting a process of integration. What has led to this thinking are,

among other reasons, the decrease in members, the small number of vocations, the lack of individuals to take over leadership. Meetings, seminars, personal and communal prayer, discernment and reflection on possible organization have taken place so far. All the Sisters are being involved. The process is slow, but based on the contemplation and reflection of the word of God and through contributions, whether in support or giving suggestions to the team leading the effort, we expect to reach a successful conclusion regarding the organization, choice of leadership and response to the mission that the Church and the people request of religious yet today.

The Sisters of Notre Dame of the Cross Join the Sisters of Saint Joseph

Sister Marie-Pierre Ruche
France

During the last Enlarged Council in Garibaldi, Brazil, October 18 to November 06, 2013, the request of the Sisters of Notre Dame of the Cross to join the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry was officially accepted, the last step in the union of these two groups who share a long history.

Their founder, Mademoiselle Adèle de Murinais, desired to devote herself to the Lord, but since her presence was needed in her family, she had to give up her desire to enter a monastery of the Visitation. Adèle strove to help in every way possible the inhabitants of the village of Murinais, located 60 kilometers from Chambéry. Encouraged by her family and by the parish priest of the village, she trained young women to teach girls in nearby villages. During their formation,



Sister Sally (second from left) with a group of Sisters of Notre Dame of the Cross in France

some of these young women manifested the desire to become religious. Not feeling competent or worthy to provide training in religious life, Adèle de Murinais asked this service of some Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry she knew in a village in the vicinity of Chambéry, where they had a small school.

With the agreement of the Archbishop of Chambéry, Mother Saint John Marcoux

responded favorably to this request. In March 1832, three young women arrived from Murinais to Bellecombette to be trained in religious life. In October of that same year, after taking the religious habit, they returned to Murinais and settled in a house in the village. There, even though their community was placed under the protection of Saint Joseph, they were called Sisters of the Cross. Quickly,

in the next year, other young girls asked to join them. Adèle, this time, took up their religious training herself, and on July 2, 1834, they made their religious vows. In this undertaking, Adèle let herself be led by circumstances, and recognizing she was not able to continue in this way, she asked the Sisters of the Cross to join the Sisters of Saint Joseph in 1837. The Bishop would not give his approval. It is thus that the small group became its own “recognized” religious congregation and that Adèle had to write the first Constitutions, inspired by those of existing congregations and in particular, those of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Since then, the paths of the two congregations have crossed several times. In 1903, with the anti-clerical laws in France expelling religious from teaching in schools, some Sisters of the Cross, who had left France were greeted by Mother Josephine, the superior in West Hartford, Connecticut. After having ministered in a small orphanage in Florence, South Carolina, they went to work with the Missionaries of La Salette in Canada, where some are today. Between 1989 and 1994, Sister Jeanine, the current Superior General, lived in our community of Chambéry le Haut where she ministered among the local people, until her congregation opened a community nearby. Elected for a second term as Superior General in 2008, Sister Jeanine began to share with her council, her concerns regarding the future of her congregation, due to its reduced strength, lack of vocations, and their desire to remain living in service to God’s people, while taking care of their Sisters. She asked Sister Maria Clara, then Provincial of our Province of France/ Belgium, whom she knew, to accompany



Former motherhouse in Murinais of the Sisters of Notre Dame of the Cross

her council in its process of discernment. And it is through this that our 2011 Enlarged General Council was led to answer a question from the Sisters of the Cross, “Would your congregation be open to consider a future request for a closer partnership or a merger if our next general chapter in 2013 decided to make such a request?” The Enlarged Council gave its agreement that we were open to consider such a request if the Sisters of Notre Dame of the Cross decided to send us one. After various steps (involving a canonist, our superior general and consultation with the CICALSAL), the Superior General of the Sisters of Notre Dame of the Cross met with all the Sisters of her congregation, including the most distant geographically (Canada, Belgium) before the issue was taken up during their 2013 General Chapter. On July 3, 2013, this general chapter voted unanimously to ask to merge with the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry. On August 7, 2013, Sister Sally sent this request

together with the necessary information on the Congregation of the Sisters of the Cross to all our Provinces, Regions and Missions, inviting them to discuss this issue and to send their replies, so that our 2013 Enlarged Council could take these into account in its process of discernment. It was by a written vote and unanimously that the members of the 2013 Enlarged Council said “yes” to the request of the Sisters of Notre Dame of the Cross to join the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry. The process of merging is underway canonically. Currently the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Cross has 33 Sisters, including 23 in France in the region of Grenoble, 6 in Canada in Saskatchewan and 4 in Belgium. The paths of the Sisters of Notre Dame of the Cross and the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry have crossed repeatedly over the years. By becoming a single congregation, they are finally realizing the initial desire of Mademoiselle Adèle de Murinais.

NEW SAINTS

S. Louis de Gonzague Violet (85)	France	17/12/2013
S. Iride Sonaglio (89)	Lagoa Vermelha	02/01/2014
S. Valborg Stasiov (98)	Denmark	09/01/2014
S. Maria Odila Lucca (101)	Paraná	05/02/2014
S. Annuntiata Kaniampurath (81)	Nagpur	23/02/2014

Sing to the Lord a New Song!

S. Severina Lúcia Brogliato,
S. Maria Inez Ramos and
S. Vilma de Oliveira
Mocimboa da Praia, Mozambique

In July, 2013, the Sisters of Saint Joseph completed 10 years of presence in Mozambique, a land full of charm, natural beauty and mysteries seen between the lines of traditional teachings. The people are determined to keep their culture and their knowledge handed down from generation to generation. However, and without alternative, little by little, their country is opening its doors to the new values of the globalized world and interacting with all the new aspects of modernity.

With much enthusiasm and joy, the Sisters of Saint Joseph tell of the first steps of their living together, sharing, dialogue and gaining knowledge in Mocimboa, the venue for their presence and mission. The joy of being a presence and making a difference among the people has maintained and still ensures the continuity of the mission.

In the people's welcome, on every face, young adult, adolescent or child, shines a smile, a visible sign of hope, going beyond the marks of suffering and neglect caused by exploitation and the domination of colonial powers over so many years.

Even among the natives, those who have better living conditions exploit their African brothers with bad working conditions, exchanging cheap labor for



food, housing and clothing. Hence, the catchphrase, "He who has, is in charge, and the rest obey ..." People are at the mercy of unscrupulous employers and live in undignified conditions without access to healthy food and water. Faced with this reality, we, Sisters of Saint Joseph, seek to be a presence in all sectors of society and the Church. And so in the middle of this world of adversity, we walk with the Gospel values of sharing, solidarity and loving life above any economic interest. As in so many places, in Mocimboa da Praia children and women are excluded from the social, psychological and economic spheres. They greatly deserve our attention and dedication, through projects like construction of school and cisterns, human formation and orientation. To give them self-esteem, we work with socialization, motor development and creative skills, with children from three to five years. In some villages where the community is willing to keep the water cleaner and be engaged in voluntary work, cisterns are built to collect rainwater. This project, "water, source of life," is life-saving for women facing lack of water. We refer

sick people and vulnerable children, as necessary, to the competent bodies which can help with solutions. In silence, step by step, and with many challenges, the mission is going on. In the post-war period, with active humanitarian aid, people became accustomed to receiving everything for free. It's a big challenge to work in the deconstruction of dependence and low self-esteem. With hard work, patience and determination, there are already small advances, a result of the policy and posture adopted by missionary Congregations and even by the government, in working to promote citizenship and self-esteem by offering people the means to "learn how to fish." It's not easy to maintain this focus, because it is slow work to change paradigms. Whoever comes to understand the process and embrace the cause, finds his freedom in leaving dependency. Today, it's been 10 years and the challenges are already different, but not any less. We are happy to be a part of this suffering beautiful history realized through the inspiration and grace of the Holy Spirit.

In Defense of Life

Sister Adelide Canci

Province of Lagoa Vermelha, Brazil

The Sisters of Saint Joseph, Province of Lagoa Vermelha, have been present in Concórdia, Santa Catarina, in southern Brazil, since 1937. They are involved with several works, among them, health care at Saint Francis Hospital, owned by a Camillian Charity. Reflecting on life and health, not only that of the sick, but in particular, that of caregivers and health care workers, Sister Alice Gaio, Pastoral Coordinator of Health at Saint Francis Hospital, has given special attention in her mission to the formation of pastoral agents. Sister Alice also served as a nurse at this hospital and has been a presence in this institution for 35 years.

An annual highlight of her work is the Seminar on Health Ministry, a feature for 13 years. These seminars have addressed different issues of social relevance and of human and Christian formation, contributing to the development of leaders who work in the area of health and the community in general. In the beginning, this was a modest work which seemed to be just another “date.” However, gradually, with publicizing the event and with feedback from the participants, the Seminars are becoming well known and sought after by others beyond the region of Santa Catarina.

The latest meeting, held October 24, 2013, with 1,113 participants in attendance, teamed up with World Youth Day, and focused on the central theme, “Youth and society,” and, “Youth and its challenges in the human, social and spiritual contexts.” Another topic was, “The Prophet in the health and care of patients.”



Currently, the Seminar is the largest national event in health care, already enjoying international prominence, reaching not only pastoral agents and health professionals, but the community in general. It is a time for training and exchange of experience that enriches through the diversity of subject matter and the excellent staff with skills to meet the needs of the participants. Registration is free, because the organizing team seeks to engage businesses and people in the community who work through donations and pro bono work.

The consultants are chosen with great care so that they leave a message of life and hope. The last Seminar counted on the assistance of Dom Frei Mário Marquez, Bishop of the Diocese of Joaçaba, and Father Leo Pessini, Provincial and President of the Brazilian Camillian Entities.

In addition to Sister Alice, all the Sisters who reside in Concórdia are also involved in the event, thus making it another great occasion promoted by the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry, in defense of the life and health of human beings.



Legal Education for Poor Women in India

Sister Philomina Pichappilly

Nagpur, India

More than two thousand women from four villages, gathered at Bhandara village, Nagpur District, Maharashtra State, India, on 9th November 2013 on the occasion of National Legal Literacy Day to share their stories of domestic violence and the power they felt within, once they knew their legal rights. An advocate by profession, I had educated women about their rights through a legal literacy program in the interior villages and slums of Nagpur which had been funded by the Indian government. This is part of a larger effort to empower women, with the help of advocates and judges, assisting women and supporting them when they are in need, with free legal aid and necessary intervention both in the court and outside the court.

The reality is that most Indians live in the villages and as many as 60 % of the women are illiterate. Yet even most educated women are not legally literate and able to claim their legal rights. Without legal education for women, the laws passed to empower them, such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, passed in 2005 in India to enable the woman to take her right and live with dignity as a person in her own home and in the matrimonial home, will only remain on the books.

The importance of legal education was seen in the gathering on November 9. The women shared freely with the group how they dared to take their legitimate right in their homes. In one incident of domestic violence, a woman who was daily being harassed by her drunken husband, rang up the local administration and also the police. The police kept the man in custody till the next day, when the man had to state in writing to the police that



Sr. Philo teaching legal literacy

he will commit no violence at home, with the neighboring women and the local animators as witnesses.

Another woman shared an incident where she was suffering violence from her husband, father-in-law and mother-in-law. Unable to suffer anymore, she decided to take her dowry items and leave the house as she had heard in the legal awareness seminar that the dowry items or gift items received by her at the time of marriage were her exclusive property. When she tried to take things away, the husband restrained her and beat her very brutally. The women's group in the village helped her to remove the dowry items and enabled her to take a rented house and stay away from the husband and his family members. They also requested the police for protection. After about a month the husband requested the women's group to mediate between him and his wife and help them to be reunited. There were many

similar stories shared which showed the importance of legal education and how it helps women feel that they are dignified persons. "Knowledge is power," one woman said reflectively. At the end of the day they collectively took a pledge to recognize the subtle forms of violence and to counteract them in their own homes and in the villages.



Gathering of women at Bhandara village, Nagpur, India

Study Tour of Israel

Sister Katia Rejane Sassi

Province of Porto Alegre, Brazil

I participated in a study tour to Israel, from October 23 to November 7, 2013.

It was sponsored by the postgraduate program of the School of Theology in São Leopoldo, where I am completing my master's degree in scripture studies. Our study group was included three teachers and 22 participants, from different Christian churches and regions of Brazil. It was an ecumenical experience of unity in diversity. In Israel, we began with 15 days of intense study. We did not follow the tourist circuit, but prioritized the archaeological sites from north to south and from east to west in Israel.

Backpacking every day, we visited many places marked by the geography and history of the people of the Bible. We had the opportunity to visit about 47 historic and archaeological sites mentioned in the Old and New Testaments. Each place, with its two to ten thousand years of history, had something that surprised us: walls, gates, cisterns, theatres, temples, palaces, tunnels, warehouses, ceramics . . . revealing the layers of different populations over the millennia. For me, the smell, the feel, the sight and sounds of each environment offered a unique perspective on the biblical narrative in each of those spaces. I will highlight some experiences that touched me regarding archaeological discoveries, historical sites or the reality of the country.

For the first five days, we stayed in Bethlehem, a Palestinian city, surrounded by a wall about eight feet high and with checkpoints controlled by Israeli security. This was one of the first impressions I had. There is no way to be in Israel without becoming aware of the political and religious disputes between Jews



In the archaeological site of Beersheba, a desert town South of Judah, associated with biblical ancestors

and Palestinians. During these days in Bethlehem, we had the opportunity to talk about conflict and attempts at peace negotiations that are still unresolved, with the Mitri Raheb, a Lutheran Christian Palestinian.

In Bethlehem, it is impossible not to be moved when visiting the Church of the

Nativity. At the entrance, one must bend low to pass through the little door of the Church, the "door of humility." On the way down to the cave, which tradition marks as the birthplace of Jesus, we find a star with 14 points, representing the 14 generations of the genealogy of Jesus (Mt 17:1). We felt enveloped



The study group at the foot of Mount Hermon

by the mystery of the divine human in the movement of descending and embodiment

On a visit to Jerusalem, an historic city for Jews, Christians and Muslims, we had an interfaith experience of respect for the diversity of sacred sites (church, mosque and synagogue), robes, ways of praying and holy days. Similarly, it is a meeting place of peoples with a diversity of faces, cultures and languages. . . In the excavations and archeological sites visited, history pulsates in the rocks along the paths, in homes and found objects that once were used by someone. Considered spectacular, the fortresses of the Herodium and Masada loom in their greatness at the top of a mountain and a hill. A refuge for Herod and his family, they lacked no comfort. During the Jewish war (66-73 AD), these places were taken and became the last pockets of resistance of revolutionaries against the Roman Empire. One realizes that, on the one hand, archaeology can reveal the marks of the powerful. But we must also look at these monumental works from the perspective of the humble people who built the fortresses for King Herod, at the cost of very heavy taxes and slave labor. Therefore, we need to be aware that archaeological discoveries are subject to interpretations that are inevitably influenced by ideological assumptions. For me, the challenge was to look at archaeological excavations from the perspective of resistance and

oppression.

Passing through the cities of the region of Galilee near the Lake of Tiberias reminded us of the steps of the itinerant Jesus, as seen in the Gospels. This contextualized experience ignited in me a new sensitivity for reading, for the interpretation of biblical texts and reinterpretation of the origins of our faith, because, until then, these places existed only in my imagination or in books.

Even if archaeology is unable to prove the veracity of many biblical accounts, this journey was an experience that brought the Bible alive for me. In Israel, I could, in fact, hear the stones speak

and experience an immersion in the history and culture of the people. The information of the local guides was able to “make visible” ancient peoples living in the midst of so many rocks and ruins. However, one should note that archaeology has difficulty finding the traces of everyday life of the people of the villages, women in particular, because these are quickly erased by time. In conclusion, the study tour was an exciting experience on every inch of this ground, of earth and history marked by conflict, destruction, resistance and achievements, whether in the past or in the present day, a story of faith, searching for freedom and shalom.



In the Church of the Nativity, in Bethlehem

U.S. Federation Begins Leadership Development Program

Sister Barbara A. Bozak

USA

The U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph began a Leadership Development Program in December

2013. The name of the program: “CSSJ’s: Leaders as Leaven,” reflects the belief that every Sister of St. Joseph is a leader wherever she is, and is a force for the transformation of society much as leaven transforms flour and water into

bread. Twenty-eight Sisters of St. Joseph, representing 13 congregations from across the United States are participating in this year-long program, which will be repeated in the coming years.

As a year-long program, “Leaders as

Leaven” offers the participants both information and a forum in which to process this. It begins and ends with a five-day gathering and includes monthly learning modules. In preparation for the first gathering each participant completes an online survey on leadership and asks ten or more persons who know her to do the same. This tool assesses the individual’s leadership skills and so each participant discovers her areas of strength and those areas where she might grow. Based on this, she develops a personal leadership development plan with goals to be achieved over the course of the year. Through the process she is in regular contact with a mentor, a Sister of St. Joseph with leadership experience, who accompanies her on this journey of personal growth.

The first gathering opened with a beautiful ritual which used the image of leaven, the image woven through each day’s prayer: Leaven of Patient Becoming, Leaven of Insight, Leaven of Embrace, Leaven of Compassion and Leaven in the Church and the World. Each day focused on a single theme developed by one presenter. On the first day Dolores Clerico, SSJ (Philadelphia) grounded the whole in the charism and the wisdom of Médaille, linking leadership with the qualities ascribed to the two trinities: inclusive love, self-



Table group sharing insights, including S. Kristin Johnsen on the left

emptying love, all-permeating love, zeal, a contemplative heart and ‘cordial’ charity. The second day found Peggy McAlister of The Leadership Circle, the organization responsible for the leadership assessment tool, leading the group in a process which helped them be more in touch with their own growing edges. Lynn Levo, CSJ (Carondelet – Albany) spent the third day breaking open different aspects of “Spiritually Intelligent Leadership” including the importance of self-awareness, emotional intelligence and how to avoid being overextended and undernourished. There was universal agreement that the input of the opening days was rich and challenging, giving all present much

material for reflection in the coming months.

During the first gathering both participants and mentors were organized in table groups with whom they shared insights. As a means of ongoing conversation and mutual support, each table group was asked to “meet” regularly over the course of the year, using available technology. This was simply the beginning of a year-long journey during which both participants and mentors will learn from one another and the 28 participants will grow in their own leadership capacity to the benefit of the federation, the individual congregations, the church and the world.



All the participants, mentors and presenters at the gathering

Sharing our Mission of Insertion in Tanzania



**Sisters Valesca Orsi and
Josiane Mota**
Tanzania

The inspiration of Jean Pierre Médaille remains a challenge today, urging us to grow increasingly in intimacy with God, in order to be able to make God's projects our own. Our founder, more than three and a half centuries ago, was moved by the calls coming from disunity and suffering and, along with generous and audacious

women, found a way to respond to these calls. Thus, we are the heirs of this generosity and boldness, and that legacy impels us to continue today this faithful and generous story.

In Msalaba Mkuu, a small village located in East Africa unknown to the developed and industrialized world, we are with a people who live in a simple way, making their living from the land, through cultivation and physical effort only, a people for whom the greatest ambition seems to be to eat and have the means to celebrate all situations of life. Another witness that we have from these people is their faith and their belonging to the

Church, in which they feel like children and collaborators. In their own way, and as far as reality and culture allow, they love their Church. This church they carry forward with their efforts, a church that, for a long time, was coordinated by the Germans, from whom they inherited a great witness of missionary zeal. Our community, which is a formation community, tries to be a simple and sensitive presence with and among these people, respecting their culture and learning from them, without forgetting just how challenging it is to deal with such different customs. However, we are welcomed and we are making progress. Each road traveled or traveled again shows us

the important goal that we have. We understand that to be a formation community is to live in a way that is simple, one that is true to this culture. Here young men and women see us as women who embody a particular way of living, since we have the uniqueness of a charism, in their culture and from their values. We want our activities to be a sign of our mission, interspersed with the generosity of this people, who often seem to walk to the beat of nature, without the running and the ambition of the great cities. Here, time is lived as space and the hands on the clock are not imperatives for daily life.

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