

French

English

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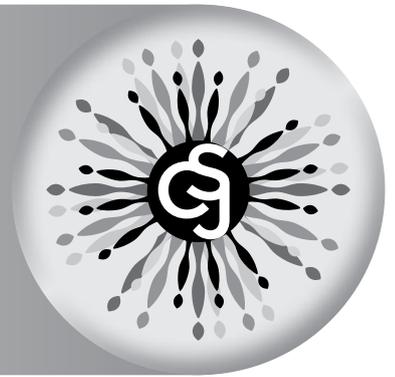
Portuguese

Norwegian

CS JOURNAL

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GENERAL COUNCIL

Holy Listening - Spiritual Direction



The sisters in the second spiritual direction training programme

Philomina Pazhuruparambil, CSJ
General Council

The second training programme in Spiritual Direction for sisters in India, under the able guidance of S. Jean Sauntry from the United States, took place in Tanmaya, Bhopal, the 28th February to 25th March, 2014. The next two phases of the same programme will be in October 2014 and March 2015. I was one of nine sisters from the four provinces of India to participate in this wonderful experience, where each participant is helped to be a Helper to the other. We are learning how to pay attention to God's communication and how to respond and grow in relationship with God and with one another seen in daily human experiences.

Today more than ever, there is a greater need for Spiritual Direction and trained Spiritual Directors. The world is really thirsting for women and men who know and love God, and who are able to help others to discover God in their experiences and to develop a growing sense of relationship with God and others. Hence the need for Spiritual Direction which will ignite the spiritual flame that is in every human being. India has a wonderful culture, spirituality, and tradition for doing good. We enjoy well-functioning families, friendly neighbors, respectful young people. There is a general acceptance of religious differences, a keen interest in education, and a reasonably good legal system. In India, we have still many vocations with the majority coming from lower middle class / caste families. Our young

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S. Jean Sauntry gives instruction to the group

women in formation are very talented, gifted, motivated and generous. Up to a point, they are open to spiritual guidance and accompaniment. They have courses on topics like charism, spirituality, Ignatian discernment. Yet we also see a

lack of accountability and spiritual depth, with some having no desire for any spiritual guidance. We have noted the lack of proper discernment especially among those considering leaving the congregation.

The challenge facing us today is to train our young religious to be committed women of love, integrity and vision. Then they will witness to God's love and compassion, stand for truth and justice and be good news for the poor. They will also be able to work with lay people and to create loving communities, united in a search for God, not divided by power games and pettiness.

What is needed are women of vision, courage and love who want to serve their brothers and sisters in the spirit of Jesus and who find their inner journey worth pursuing. Those of us who are being trained as Spiritual Directors face the challenge of fostering the importance of spiritual direction at all levels, especially in initial formation.

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

Speaking Out Against Trafficking

Linda Pepe, CSJ
JPIC - USA

In 2006, the Sisters of St Joseph of Chambéry issued a Corporate / Congregational Statement on Trafficking. The Statement, was signed by the previous General Council in the name of the Sisters and Associates of the Congregation, and then sent to our Ambassadors at the United Nations, as well as to our national leaders and officials. (This Statement is posted on our Website: www.csjchambery.org) With the World Cup Soccer Games in Brazil this June, the JPIC Commission is proposing a congregational action using the Statement on Trafficking. Major sporting events, regardless of the country hosting them, provide the opportunity for labor and sex traffickers to supply various services for those attending. By raising our corporate

voice, we denounce the inhuman and exploitative nature of trafficking, as well as raise awareness in the sponsors and supporters of these major events, that there is a significant increase in the number of persons trafficked during these times. To increase awareness of this reality globally, we suggest that each Province or Region take this opportunity to make public our Statement on Trafficking.

The Contact Sister from each Province or Region will be asked to investigate whether the World Cup Games are sponsored by any large businesses or corporations in their country. If there are sponsors within their country, we ask that the Corporate Statement on Trafficking, signed by the Provincial or Regional leadership teams in the name of the Sisters and Associates in the Province or Region, be sent to the CEO's of the various corporations.



We raise our voices again because of the facts concerning human trafficking. About 1 to 4 million people are trafficked annually in the world, according to figures from the United Nations. Of that number, more than 90% are women, youth and children. Human trafficking occurs not only for sexual and labor exploitation, but also for organ harvesting. Global warming and severe natural disasters have left millions of persons homeless and impoverished, which has created desperate people

easily exploited by human traffickers. Human trafficking is a global phenomenon that is fueled by poverty and gender discrimination. The Second Vatican Council stated that “slavery, prostitution, the market for women and young people and ignominious working conditions in which people are treated as mere instruments and not as free and responsible people are ‘shameful’ situations, which ruin human civilization, dishonor those who

behave in this way and deeply offend the honor of the Creator”. Our Sisters and Associates in Brazil are in the best position to have a major impact on the games. Many of them have already joined with their local bishops, who have chosen the evil of Trafficking as the issue during the Lenten Season. What better time than the present could there be to re-issue the Corporate Statement on Trafficking from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry?



An Itinerant Sister



Sister Chiara at the door and switchboard

Sister Chiara Frallicciardi

Italy

One day, while walking around and admiring the countryside of my dear village and while contemplating creation, I felt in my heart a great love for children.

I wanted to educate children, teach them the catechism and how to pray while admiring the wonderful beauty of creation. So I began teaching catechism in the parish. An important day in my

life happened when a Redemptorist Father called me and said to me, “Jesus wants so many things from you.” So begins my “following” of Jesus. Finally, between struggles and joy I entered the Institute of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry, and there began my religious life. The superiors, appreciating my predisposition to generosity and availability, sent me to several communities, where there was a call for any type of service. My mission was mainly among youth, whom I involved in the pastoral life of the parish.

I spent many years with small children, who attended kindergarten in our communities. But the most beautiful years, demanding special sacrifices, were spent in Santo Padre delle Perriere, a town in the countryside of Marsala, Sicily. This land is full of North African immigrants. Every day and at any hour, Tunisians would knock at the door asking for food and basic necessities. We, Sisters of the community, were always available and ready for any request. Furthermore, the Sanctuary of San Francesco di Paola, entrusted to our care, required our ongoing presence, and I took on this commitment for the apostolate and for evangelization.

I can say that wherever I was, I saw there the hand of God, who has worked in me and in my Sisters, calling us to work in various fields, with families, and in parish groups. Everything was God’s work! Peace and joy filled my heart, even in the most difficult times, because I know that those who work for the Kingdom of God, like Jesus, embrace his cross.

Even today I keep my mission of communion within the community of Casaleto, being available to care for the church of the Institute and to work as portress, where a warm and welcoming word is always necessary for people who come to our home and participate in the community.

Experiences that Transform

Sister Ana Amélia de Oliveira
Miranda

N/NE Region, Brazil



The State of Maranhão in northeast Brazil is one of the poorest in the country, where large landholdings, agrarian conflict, illiteracy, and also politics, are formidable challenges to the Church, to our “being missionaries.” The suffering of the people is a cry that rises to the heavens continually. And the option for the poor is not always well understood and accepted by the whole Church. Matthew 25: 35-40 comes to my heart and ears and moves me to join with others to be supportive without being paternalistic. I discovered in the face of the hungry, the pilgrims and

the sick, the face of Christ, and this creates in me a strong commitment to evangelization.

My personal journey of being inserted in this difficult reality for years connected me to the history of grassroots organizations in Brazil. My presence in rural areas and hearing the cry of the farmworkers led me, along with other leaders, to create a Pastoral Land Commission (CPT) in Maranhão, in order to support the organization of rural workers and their struggles for rights, for land, and for a decent life.

I coordinated the CPT in the Diocese of Balsas, in the south of the State of Maranhão in a very difficult period of persecution, conflict, of not being appreciated because I am a woman. This did not stop me from being a supportive presence of encouragement in joint pastoral work. I participated in these grassroots organizations on a diocesan and regional level. This has been very enriching because of the fellowship and liberating growth in faith, consciousness and spirituality. I was also Coordinator of Pastoral care in the Diocese of Balsas for three periods over 11 years, during which I suffered and cried, but I assumed this role, as woman and religious, in the Church and in society, supporting all the laity in their role.

This evangelizing process, its methodology and practice, is illuminated by Jesus Christ and his life project as well

as by the word of God. Knowledge of scripture has helped us, along with the prayerful reading of the Bible. People love the word of God, and the Bible. I am reminded of a leader, a very old man who claimed to be only 40, and in wonder I asked why this was. He replied, “When I first knew the Bible, I was born again, so now I count my years just from that point on.” This experience doesn’t refer to only the text itself, but to the experience of a covenant with the God of the People, a new experience of helping people to become the “people of God,” and discovering also the face of Mother, the human face of God.

During these past 12 years, in the light of the Mystery of the Incarnation in our spirituality, I have deepened my concrete experience with indigenous peoples, with a respectful, friendly and supportive approach. I have learned so much from them: their simplicity, values, their love of mother earth and of nature, reciprocity, living with the necessary, the community, the collective ... Our lines of action are an incentive to organization, articulation and the pursuit of their rights to land, ethnic identity, culture, education, health...

I dream of a new Church, a new society and a new world. In simplicity as a Sister of Saint Joseph, with my life and spirituality, with my feet firmly planted in reality and in partnership with many leaders, I’m living the charism of unity in the service of life.

NEW
SAINTS

S. Marie Lucienne Boyer (98)	France	27/02/2014
S. Maria Fanny Bonotto (87)	Paraná	03/03/2014
S. Heloisa Aresi (94)	Lagoa Vermelha	03/03/2014
S. Marybeth Harrington (87)	United States	03/03/2014
S. Madeleine Grillet (97)	France	05/03/2014
S. Marcelina Venturi (74)	Paraná	11/03/2014
S. Mary Delphine Chakanal (79)	Tanmaya	19/03/2014
S. Antonieta Maria Bernardes (97)	São Paulo	07/04/2014
S. Carmeline Joseph (86)	Pakistan	10/04/2014
S. Francis Xavier Vadakekara (77)	Tanmaya	11/04/2014
S. Claire Gonthier (91)	France	14/04/2014
S. Maria Edith Tasca (98)	Porto Alegre	18/04/2014
S. Emilia Margonari (82)	São Paulo	21/04/2014
S. Ethel McIlvain (92)	United States	26/04/2014
S. Iracema de Carvalho (84)	São Paulo	27/04/2014

Always on the Outside Looking in

Jackie Goodin, CSJ

Tanzania

Our experiences living and working here in Tanzania have opened our eyes in unexpected ways to the marginalized lives of refugees and immigrants around the world. Here we are the “wazungu” – the strangers – who live amidst our “dear neighbors” who continually point out how different we are from them.

“Wazungu” is a Kiswahali word meaning “people who are not black Africans; stranger, foreigner.” The concept is deeply embedded in the culture as is clear when you hear toddlers calling out “mzungu” (foreigner) and pointing at you.

It doesn't matter that we try to be a very visible sign of God's All-Inclusive Love. It doesn't matter that we continually work to establish positive relationships with the people: neighbors (literally), co-workers and employees, business people with whom we deal, the faith community. It doesn't matter that we are committed to learning the national language and appreciating the many positive elements of the culture and history. It doesn't matter if our skin is pinkish-white or “café au lait,” which is not so different to the wide variety of “black” skin tones we see all around us. It doesn't matter that we acknowledge the negative (as well as positive) heritage left to the country by foreign missionaries since the first settlements in the 19th century. We are the “wazungu.”

The 2009 Chapter of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry clearly calls us to be on the margins and to hold a particular sensitivity for refugees and



Sisters Clementina (General Council), Priscilla (India), Eliane (Brazil), Jackie (USA), Sally (General Council), Valesca (Brazil), Frances (Canada)

immigrants, a challenge we, the Family of Joseph, have embraced.

There is always a boundary to be crossed for the sake of the “other.” And we do this with all the love we can muster. We know that leaving our home culture — physically or psychically — involves painful transitions and transformations. It takes a long time to truly accept the new culture as comfortably as one's original culture. We would not wish on anyone our hurt, anger, confusion, helplessness, loneliness as “wazungu.” But if we look at the refugees or immigrants in our home countries, we know what they are feeling. And we can see ourselves as the very ones who call out mockingly “wazungu” in our home countries, easily turning away from those who are different from us, not acting neighborly. Sometimes the adopted country is warmly welcoming to the newcomer, and sometimes the adopted country is cruelly and openly rejecting. National

policies are one measure of hospitality, but the everyday welcome by ordinary people is another reality. We might smile at a person of a different color, different language or different way of living, but really feel just the opposite. We might say “welcome” but really want to say “go away, you don't speak my language, don't know all of our ways, aren't like me/us.”

Our world is getting smaller, national boundaries less and less meaningful. We are pilgrim people of faith, and all around us are pilgrims seeking peace, opportunity, freedom, respect, and purpose.

It is a real challenge to step away from our home culture and see the world from the eyes of “the other,” to use our feelings of hurt and rejection as an opening to learn more about the experiences of others, to truly welcome the one who is different, to become the one human family that God has long desired for us.

Alternatives for Life

Sister Hilda Maria Riva
N/NE Region, Brazil

Usually, the word “Amazon” sounds like music to the ears of the world. The collective imagination sees a representation of great beauty, a sanctuary preserved from the greed of civilizations, virgin forests populated by animals and birds, endless waters reflecting the infinity of heaven, free peoples finding their own path, and places where one can go by canoe or travel on trails through the woods.

Our community, however, lies in another reality, on the outskirts of a big city. The New Victory neighborhood, where we live, is the result of a fairly recent urban occupation. Choosing the peripheries – a choice for us, but for the people their only option – implies some “privileges” such as poor infrastructure and irregular, insufficient or nonexistent basic public services such as water, electricity, postal services, public transport, education, health and security. New Victory, situated in the eastern zone, the most populous of Manaus, is known and feared because of crime, trafficking and the consumption of drugs, and insecurity, which gives it the title of a ‘red zone.’

In this context, we wanted to address the issue of women, one of the priorities we have chosen since our arrival. Mostly, women do not work outside the home. They are poor, have many children, little education and little initiative to improve their living conditions even if they so wished. Thus, they become extremely dependent on their husbands or companions. Many women are threatened and are battered morally and physically.

In this diversity, we seek the richness and the challenge of human promotion, to awaken and develop potential. One alternative, well received, was the



Women with their painting

formation of a crafts group with various activities: embroidery, fabric painting, crocheting, macramé, and use of recyclable materials. The Congregation supported us through the Missionary Fund to begin some activities, and the group gradually began to sell its work, renewing the stock of material. Sales are held by the group through a bazaar, or individually.

Twice a week for three hours, there are community activities. The idea is to have more than simply a teaching and learning context. The same group that started three years ago has continued. It is changing, because one of the characteristics of urban occupation is mobility. Conviviality and promoting the sharing of skills and life are the main objectives of the group. Thus, bonds of friendship and solidarity and mutual

assistance are created, while carefully weaving the strands of crochet and macramé. Together they also become aware of their problems, externalizing and healing their wounds. While the paintbrush gives color to the cloth, each one is also giving new tones to her own life. An easy task? In hindsight we can say yes, for they are smart women, interested and savvy, and one can see the result in the work of their hands. The change in life is a bit slower, but equally visible, and has a special meaning when they recount it.

With these women, we live our charism, and we have found new faces of the merciful love of our God, communion and Trinity. Welcoming them without prejudice, moral or religious, and being tolerant of differences is freeing, making them happy and us as well.



Sister Hilda standing and guiding the painting activity

Listening to the Voice of Women

Barbara Bozak, CSJ
USA

The Commission on the Status of Women held their 58th annual session at the United Nations in New York, March 10-21, 2014. Established in 1946 to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, the commission continues to address the many challenges faced by women across the globe. The importance of this commission's work is made visible by the thousands of women who come from half way around the world to participate and offer their insights on what is happening where they are from.

With 2015, the target date for the implementation of the Millennium Goals, drawing near, the meeting focused on MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women. Besides the official gatherings where ambassadors to the UN spoke, many other events ("side events" and "parallel events"), organized by large or small organizations, addressed this topic. The very interesting parallel events – often with 10 or more going on simultaneously – brought the voice of ordinary women to the table. In the two days that I participated I heard women from Latin America address the issue of violence against women; African women speak of their involvement in establishing peace and security in their country; Italian women tell of how they



African women from the Sudan, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo address the topic of peace and security

are working to empower women and girls; and grass roots women from Africa, South America and the Philippines recount their success in organizing and mobilizing women to be protagonists in their own lives.

A theme that ran through the whole was the immense power of women to bring about positive change for themselves and for others. Although none of these women had a voice in developing the Millennium Development Goals, they are most often the ones who are directly involved in the empowerment of women and who work on the ground for gender equality. Simple, rural women farmers of Nicaragua spoke of how, through the establishment of co-operatives which they run, they were able to raise the literacy rate for women and the standard of living in several communities. The establishment of savings co-operatives and basic financial literacy, as it was presented by women from Uganda, Nigeria, Peru, and the Philippines, is an important aid in helping women gain economic security and achieve property



Logo for the meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women – 2014

ownership, thus helping their families move out of poverty. It was heartening to hear women from Burundi, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan recount the role they play in the peace process in spite of the difficulties their countries face to establish peace and security. These and other grassroots women cried out for their voices to be heard, not only in their own countries, but also in the UN, as governments establish the Post-2015 Agenda to continue the work begun with the Millennium Development Goals.

Province of Caxias do Sul, Brazil

June 6-8, 2014

Region North / Northeast, Brazil

June 19-22, 2014

Province of Italy

July 18-21, 2014

Province of Paraná, Brazil

August 28-31, 2014

CHAPTERS OF ELECTIONS

The Loyola Centre – Encouraging Harmony in Diversity

Marie-Kristin Riosianu, CSJ
Norway

The Loyola Centre located at the St. Joseph Retreat Center in Grefsen (Oslo) Norway organised a meeting for Spiritual Directors in early April of this year. Among the 17 participants registered were many Lutherans as well as Catholics. This ecumenical program responds to a great demand for retreat centres and spiritual support in Norway. The Loyola Centre, made up of three laypersons who are members of the Norwegian Lutheran Church, a Marist priest and Sisters of St. Joseph Marit Brinkmann and Anette Moltubakk, had its humble beginnings at Grefsen in early 2012.

The Loyola Centre has grown out of the Norwegian province's focus on spiritual life since 1991 when it established a retreat centre in Nesøya, a suburb of Oslo, responding to the great need for supporting the spiritual dimension of life in Norway. The early days were guided by Sisters Marit Brinkmann, Beate Grevenkamp and Hedwig Osterhus, all of whom received their training in spiritual direction and supervision in the USA. After the sale of the Nesøya property in 2007, the retreat centre was moved to Grefsen, where the central house of the Norwegian province is located, a property with spacious rooms and beautiful natural surroundings. First, in Nesøya, and now in Grefsen, we have offered a place where both lay people and religious might find the resources for spiritual growth and development. Many come to listen to God's voice in an atmosphere of silence and prayer. Those who come are in contact with us, our neighbours and with



The group who are responsible for the Loyola Center, including S. Anette (on left) and S. Marit (2nd from right)

God. Over the years, many priests from the Norwegian Lutheran Church have participated in the activities of the retreat center. For this ministry we have developed an important collaboration with the local Marist Fathers. And every summer our team is strengthened by the presence of one or more Jesuit priests assisting us from Germany and/or the USA. Since the autumn of 2014 we have also involved some retreat supervisors who have trained with us. These spiritual directors have attended several training courses and retreats led by Jesuits. As part of their ongoing formation they are included in the Norwegian/Scandinavian Manresa group which has monthly meetings and, annually, one further week of training and deepening of their education. We are living in an age where many men and women are genuinely searching. Many have a need to withdraw from their daily routine, in silence and be filled by the spirit of God. The centre seeks to meet this need by nourishing and strengthening the spiritual life and integrity of the participants who seek spiritual guidance. Thereby it contributes to the spiritual growth and integrity of the Church and Society. Grounded in the Ignatian spiritual tradition and spiritual

exercises, the centre also supports and strengthens persons who give spiritual guidance, in co-operation with other spiritual management environments in Norway, and also internationally when this is beneficial.

The close co-operation between the Loyola Centre, the St. Joseph Sisters and the St. Joseph Retreat Centre would not be possible without Sisters Christa, Cresentia and Franzisca who are responsible for the practical management of the centre. The mission of the Loyola Centre, to help those that seek a life in greater love and unity with God and with each other, corresponds beautifully to the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph.. It is a centre that encourages harmony in diversity.



Spiritual Direction

A Missionary Experience in Amazonas

Sister Rita Tessaro

Province of Lagoa Vermelha, Brazil

Choosing to be engaged in volunteer work during holiday time was, for me, an adventure and fun. Being part of a group of 13 people from the Diocese of Vacaria for 15 days of missionary work in the Archdiocese of Manaus, Amazonas, was a great learning experience and a special moment of evangelization. The Diocesan missionary team, answering the request of the parish priest for a training course and the mission, was made up of three priests, a Sister of Saint Joseph of Chambéry, a seminarian, three couples and three young people.

The work took place from January 25 to February 2, 2014, among 12 communities of Lake Janauacá, with the goal of increasing the missionary awareness of these communities with a new spirit and missionary style. We sought to achieve this goal through missionary animation of the community, people, children, youth, adults, and the sick and elderly, through visits to families and training of groups of children and adolescents, young people, couples, families and adults, and by identifying and getting the commitment of local coordinators for the groups.

The people of the area are very good, involved in fishing and agriculture, especially the cultivation of cassava. They are simple, communicative, festive and appreciative. They did their best to accommodate and help us.

The missionary experience provided us an opportunity to embody the discipleship of Jesus. Being in the midst of the people, sharing experiences, celebrating, praying and interacting with the most diverse dimensions of the life of this people is to understand the path



Visiting the residents of Lago Janauacá

of Jesus. We also saw on the face of each brother and sister the joy of being able to share their lives with each one of us. Seeing that we are on a mission is more than a privilege, it is a gift from God.

We felt the special protection of Our Lady as a Missionary on the front lines. The missionary team brought along the pilgrim image of our Lady of Aparecida. Whether on the plane, at the airport, on the boat, or in the communities, we saw and felt the passion the people have for her. Her image caused different expressions of faith to pass among the

people.

As a church, we have the responsibility to share what we are with other cultures and other people in the world. With the inspiration of our founder, Father Médaille, we need to respond to the needs of the people today and make ourselves instruments of Unity and Reconciliation.

We recognize the importance of respecting each group and inculturating the Gospel, choosing to work with those who are poor and excluded. With this, we hope to be signs of hope and witnesses of a society of Justice and Solidarity.



Sister Rita animating one of the celebrations

Three Seminars on Charism and Spirituality in Brazil

Maria Cristina Gavazzi, CSI

Italy



Sisters Cristina and Elisabete (translator) during the Seminar

The five Provinces and the N/NE Region of Brazil organized three major workshops on spirituality and the charism of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, inviting me from Italy as speaker. The seminars were held over three weekends, between January 31 and February 16 in Teresina (Piauí State in the north of Brazil), in Itu (State of São Paulo) and in Garibaldi (State of Rio Grande do Sul in southern Brazil). A new element in the meetings was the presence of Associates, who for the first time, participated with heartwarming enthusiasm in these three in-depth seminars on the charism, along with many sisters of all ages. These seminars are part of a much broader process in the Brazilian provinces over the last several years. It has as its final goal, the creation of a single province within the Congregation, with unity of hearts to understand and participate in the common mission of communion as its indispensable basis. Among the themes of the seminar that most caught the attention of the participants was that of community life, with particular emphasis on relationships lived inside and outside the community. We have behind us decades

of reflection, experimentation and lived experience. Many tensions have already been experienced, the polarity between large and small communities, between homogeneous and non-homogeneous communities, between inserted or prophetic communities and the more traditional ones. For years we have experimented with and lived multicultural community, consolidation of communities, and communities with a plurality of services and professionalism. We agree that a community closed in on itself is a rigid community. Our communities are living in a healthy way when they open their doors and windows to the world, go down to the streets, accompany women and men, and listen with their hearts as they suffer, struggle and love. We need people-friendly communities, centered on a common project, open to dialogue and capable of listening, communities where one feels at home and where we can offer our contributions and accept with gratitude those of others in a creative way. Another theme that warmed the hearts of the participants was leadership. We are all leaders and exercise leadership

continuously, for better or for worse. Each person has the ability to influence others, and we all project on others our influence, good or bad, big or small, and we do it all the time. An important aspect of formation is to aim to become aware of the leadership ability in each of us. Leadership comes from within, from what we are as much as what we do. The leader is a person who knows very well what she wants and what has real value. This is the identity of a Sister of Saint Joseph. In initial formation, Father Médaille is very clear in saying that, "it would be good not to admit any young woman who does not have the appropriate qualifications to be the superior of the community as a whole." Leadership is a joint shared venture, and it is the ability to generate life, in the sense of engaging, encouraging, and giving visions of hope to its members. I conclude by recalling the words of Pope Francis, "Live and always remember the centrality of Christ, the evangelical identity of consecrated life. Help your community to live the going out from itself in a direction of adoration and service."



Sisters and Associates gathered in Garibaldi

Responding to a Tragedy in Orissa

Sr. Anjana Therattil and
Sr. Navya Neelam
Pachmarhi Province, India

February 9, 2014 was a black day for the town of Sambalpur, Orissa in India when a tragedy struck a picnic party at Hirakud Reservoir. A boat capsized in the middle of the reservoir and 31 people, including many from our school family, met their watery graves. For us this tragedy was beyond belief. We lost from our school three little girls: one from the kindergarten, one from Class-III and one from Class-VII. Little Kashis of the kindergarten class lost her mother and grandparents. Vidhi Agrawal of Class III lost her father. Harshita of Class III lost her father and little sister. Ronak of Class VI lost his mother. Shreya Tiwari of Class VII lost both her parents and her sister. Rajat of Class IX lost his mother and little brother. Among those lost were also three ex-students who completed their studies just three years back. Most of the people who died were some way or another associated with us. The entire town was numb with grief, as the news of the deaths kept pouring in. Some bodies were missing and found only after two days. We sisters were hearing of the deaths of our students, their dear ones and ex-students, one after the other. Some families lost two or



three members.

We visited every family we knew from which someone had died. In the beginning we were present in the family at the arrival of the bodies and waited until they were taken for cremation. After a day or two we visited the families again, talking with them, listening to their memories of their dear ones who had died, praying with them again. This was true even though none of these people were Christian. We assured these families of our support for them and their children entrusted to our care in the school.

At the end of the month we organized a condolence service, which was an inter religious prayer service, in our school for our children and others who had lost a

loved one.

We, the sisters, make it a point to give extra attention to the children who are still with us and I, S. Navya, the principal, still maintain phone contact with Shreya from Class VIII who is in her aunt's house in another state because both her parents and sister died. She is left with only one other sister. This tragedy has called us to be more attentive to those who are vulnerable and take extra care of the children who come to our school, since no one escaped the effects of what happened that day.

We reached out with love and compassion, which was all we could do, and many people later told us how touched they were by our presence with them.

S. Giovanna Rossella Passalacqua

Italy 22/02/2014

S. Eliete Dal Molin

Caxias do Sul 29/03/2014

S. Snehal Pazhanilath

Pachmarhi 10/05/2014

S. Nisha Karekkatt

Pachmarhi 10/05/2014

S. Carmeline Fernandes

Nirmala 27/05/2014

S. Paimala Arul Mariadas

Tanmaya 29/05/2014

FINAL
PROFESSIONS

Brazil: Integration Process



General Council, Brazil/Bolivia Coordinators and Integration Team

Sister Andréia Pires

Brazil

March 8, 2014, International Women's Day, an historical day, entered into the history of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry in Brazil because of a decisive step in the process of integration. Called by the General Chapters of 1997 and 2003 and in response to that of 2009, Sisters of the five Provinces: Caxias do Sul, Lagoa Vermelha, Paraná, Porto Alegre and São Paulo, and the N/NE Region of Brazil began a process of reflection to seek new forms of organization for the Congregation in Brazil. There have been many common activities and steps already taken since the 1970s: meetings of coordination teams, formation, some shared missions, communication, etc. But now the scale is different, because there is a decrease in the number of members, with the majority over age 70, as well as dispersion of forces and resources. It is necessary to join forces, people,

activities, and works, among other things. In 2013, after years of reflection and study, the process of implementing some of the goals continued. Worksheets were prepared, along with prayer and reflection for all the Sisters, in order for them to have knowledge of the current situation of the Congregation in Brazil and to clearly choose a type of organization favoring life and mission: one province, two provinces or some suggestion of other ways. The option was made through a free, secret and personal ballot. On March 8, 2014, in Curitiba, with much anticipation, the day to open the envelopes sent by the communities and the reading of the votes arrived. The event took place in the traditional and familiar meeting room of the Saint Joseph Convent. There, the Sisters of the General Council, Sally Hodgdon and Ieda Tomazini, the Provincial Coordinators of the Provinces and the Regions of Brazil/Bolivia, as well as the Integration Team responsible for animating the process, met. The counting of the votes was very

serene. Each Coordinator opened the envelopes for which she was responsible and Sister Ieda read them aloud, vote by vote, also tabulating the results. The other participants in this historic moment accompanied the reading attentively and made their own notes.

The option of each Sister, concerning the organizational model of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry in Brazil, was registered thus: total Sisters, 612; Sister voters, 552; Sisters who opted for one province 459, totaling 83% of voters. These expressive numbers marked a new step - confident, hopeful and defiant. There is no established path. Yes, there are targets, milestones and objectives that need to be achieved by all, together, in unity!

After the verification, the General Council declared the outcome of the vote and encouraged the process of reconfiguration of the Province in Brazil to continue. The coordinators and the Integration Team emphasized the importance that each Sister participate and be involved in the process. We know that this process is done step by step, and that there will be many steps to be taken over the next two years (or more). This will include for the development of the model, the forms of participation and management, the make-up of different teams, among others. All this is necessary for open-mindedness and the prayerful participation of each member of the Congregation in Brazil. It has been emphasized that the Bolivia Region, constituted in 2011, opted to continue activities together, including formation and communication, but did not enter into this reorganization process.

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