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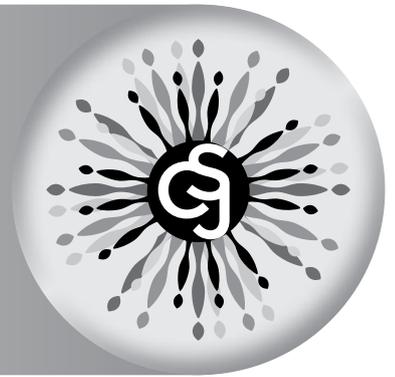
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GENERAL COUNCIL

A Call to Live Reconciliation



A family working on the land in the Northeast of Brazil

Sr. Sally Hodgdon

General Council

Convoled the 2015 General Chapter on Ascension Thursday, a special time of our liturgical year, a time filled with the hope of Jesus' Resurrection, his Ascension and our anticipating the Spirit of Pentecost. Certainly our preparation for this General Chapter, begun during these days, will be blessed! Our Chapter theme, *Living the*

Dynamism of Reconciliation and Unity in the Peripheries of Our Fractured World, calls us to live, in new ways and with greater energy, our charism of reconciliation resulting in the grace of unity. Each day we become aware of new areas of brokenness in our own settings and throughout the world. We live with personal brokenness in our families and communities, and we witness the many fractures in the lives of those with whom we minister. During these coming months leading

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up to October 2015, we will reflect on and pray with how we can be a new presence of reconciliation.

I share one example of an area in need of reconciliation. As I write this article, Sister Ieda and I are visiting our sisters in Marituba, in the State of Pará, in the Region of North/Northeast Brazil. There are many communities of people in this area fighting for their rights to hold onto the land on which they are living. Brazil has a history of groups, companies and individuals invading empty land and making it their own. In this place it was a large corporation who bought a particular piece of land but then took over more land around it and failed to pay any fees or taxes to the government. Eventually their business failed, due to the debt owed the government and the unpaid past salaries owed to their workers. These former employees are one group of people now fighting for this abandoned land.

Another group of people who claim the same land are individuals and families who, seven years ago, invaded the empty land, cleared it and built on it to open a small business or raise their families. Some have documents which show that the State recognized the land was abandoned and no longer belonged to the corporation. The State gave this



Sisters Sally and Ieda in Marituba with two of the Leaders of the Association of the Moradores

land to the Municipality and the prior mayor approved their living on this land. Now the tensions among these different groups of people who are struggling to claim the same land are very high. The conflicts are deep and violence escalates often. Our sisters are a presence and support to these people. Today we met two men, the leaders of a group of families who are negotiating with the Municipality to stay on their land. The former leader of this group was killed as a result of his efforts in this cause. But these two men, together with the women and men in their group,

know they are entitled to live on this land and are not willing to back down under pressure by large developers, other land owners and the mayor. These men and women, who are bright and articulate but viewed as inferior to those who are more highly educated, have the courage to continue this fight, even knowing the dangers they face. Our sisters, who are part of their community, ask themselves each day in prayer how they can help reduce the tensions and conflict as they continue to journey with these families. Our sisters are living reconciliation in a new way.

Sr. Romênia Angela Lima da Silva	North/Northeast Region	04/01/2014
Sr. Josiane Garcia Leopoldino	Paraná	04/01/2014
Sr. Dilciane lung de Jesus	São Paulo	04/01/2014
Sr. Luz Heidy Pierola Guarimo	Bolívia	19/01/2014
Sr. Nirmala Soreng	Nagpur	24/05/2014
Sr. Sushmita Kerketta	Nagpur	24/05/2014
Sr. Maria Madhalai	Nagpur	24/05/2014
Sr. Nisha Matera	Tanmaya	29/05/2014
Sr. Aponia Lakra	Nirmala	31/05/2014
Sr. Amandeep Toppo	Nirmala	31/05/2014
Sr. Felicita Lakra	Nirmala	31/05/2014
Sr. Agatha Ekka	Pachmarhi	01/06/2014
Sr. Nisha Kisku	Pachmarhi	01/06/2014
Sr. Belven Sujatha	Pachmarhi	01/06/2014
Sr. Veronica Agatha Turkey	Pachmarhi	01/06/2014
Sr. Clara Francis	Pachmarhi	01/06/2014

Go and Proclaim!

Sr. Marilene Marcon

Province of Caxias do Sul, Brazil

The Vocation Symposium of Brazil was held May 16 to 20, 2014, bringing together the four regions of the south: São Paulo, Paraná, Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina. In this symposium we, the Sisters of Saint Joseph, and lay people who are part of Vocation Animation Service teams (SAV) in the provinces and dioceses, had the joy of meeting together at the Mariapolis Ginetta Center in São Paulo, Brazil.

The theme of the Symposium was, “Go and proclaim! A diversity of vocations for a great mission,” aimed at promoting the culture of vocation in the Church and in society as well as progress in missionary discipleship, aware that we are a gathering of those who are called. As vocation animators, we experience moments of celebration that challenge us to love our vocation and to be witnesses of joy in the following of Jesus Christ.

We recalled the 50 years since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the world day of prayer for vocations (1964), and the vocation events of our own continent, the congresses and other efforts. The history of the Pastoral/Vocation



Participants left to right:

Helio de Jesus Lopes Madruga, Sister Helena dos Passos, Sister Marilene Marcon, Sister Ana Paula Ribeiro, Sister Angelina Zampieri, Luciano Schafer and Sister Angela Maria Ribas

Animation service (PV/SAV) in Brazil has built valuable theological-pastoral content. We also shared the wealth of experiences and initiatives on the regional level: encouraging youth to use social networks to evangelize; formation work with those to be confirmed; and a graphic design course for vocation animators; pilgrimages and vocation schools.

Conscious of the need to develop a culture of vocations, we wrote a letter of commitment saying: “We go deeper and reflect on the wealth of diversity at the service of unity.” In this document, we highlighted that, “Vocation Animation is a service of the Church, requiring an attitude of humility, docility, pastoral conversion and ongoing formation. Each

animator needs, in the way they express themselves and act, to explicitly show the value of all the charisms, ministries and services arising from the spirit and gifts in the Church.”

As Sisters of Saint Joseph and laity, we commit ourselves to ensure vocation animation as a priority in our schedules and daily activities. It is our duty to invest in vocation training for all members of the community, with special attention to team members, using creative strategies, such as conducting symposia involving the ministers and organizations of the people of God. We feel particularly motivated and encouraged by Pope Francis in proclaiming the joy of the Gospel with our lives.

Sr. Rossella Passalacqua

Sr. Eliete Dal Molin

Sr. Snehal Pazhanilath

Sr. Nisha Karekatt

Sr. Parimala Arul Mariadas

Sr. Carmeline Fernandes

Italy

Caxias do Sul

Pachmarhi

Pachmarhi

Tanmaya

Nirmala

22/02/2014

29/03/2014

10/05/2014

10/05/2014

29/05/2014

31/05/2014

FINAL
PROFESSIONS

Celebrating Women in Pakistan

Sr. Sumera Emmanuel, Novice
Pakistan

On 8th March 2014, a programme was held in Quetta, Balochistan, with the topic "Women of Purpose". As Sisters of St. Joseph, we are women of joy and consolation, imbued with our charism of loving union. We organized a programme with women on this occasion, to show how, as women, we could become the voice of the needy and helpless around us with the courage to listen to others who are suffering in order to have a better life.

The programme began with prayer, followed by a reading from Genesis which recounts the creation of woman, in order to highlight the presence of women in this world. We recalled that God looked down and saw that man was not complete but something was missing, so God made the woman to work alongside the man. Different presentations, all related to the topic, were part of the programme. Many of the topics addressed touched on the reality of Pakistan, an Islamic country. Our focus on a daily basis is to

devote our energy to human rights in Pakistan, an issue that is very complex, given the country's diversity.

For years, women in Pakistan have been denied the enjoyment of a whole range of rights: economic, social, civil and political. They are denied not only the right to Education, but also the right to decide matters relating to their marriage and divorce. Women are often victims of domestic violence and physical abuse, including rape, acid throwing and burning. Honor killing is still widespread in Pakistan. Acid throwing is on the increase. Girls and women continue to be traded to settle debts or conflicts. The open sale of girls and women in the market is reported in underdeveloped areas, including parts of Balochistan. It is sad to say that laws and regulations are in place but not enforced. The struggle for women's equality has made positive gains but inequality is still a major issue. The programme ended with games for the women, helping them to realise that they are valuable, part of the beauty of this creation, that they can do anything. Nothing is impossible, but it may require a struggle and effort on our part. In Quetta we are trying our best to bring women to the forefront so that they have courage to work side by side

with men in all spheres of life, so that the life for the future generations will be pleasant, prosperous and happy.

Sister Carmeline Joseph, a tireless advocate for the rights of all from the time of her arrival in Quetta from India in 1948, left this life on April 10, 2014.

The legacy of caring for the neediest, visiting families, whether Christian or Muslim, encouraging parents to educate their children and being a joyful, loving presence is a gift she gave the people of Pakistan and the Sisters who learned much from her.



Sister Carmeline with the priests blessing the new sewing center for women in Quetta



Sister Sadaf leads the prayer



Women gathered in Quetta for the programme on March 8

A Global Meeting for Justice

Sr. Linda Pepe
USA

The Global Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Group of the Congregations of Saint Joseph, which includes all the federations and congregations throughout the world, met in Brentwood, NY, from April 27th through May 2nd, 2014. The Chambéry Congregation was represented by Sr. Nilva Rosen of the province of Lagoa Vermelha in Brazil and Sr. Linda Pepe of the US province. In addition to the Chambéry presence, there were sisters representing the congregations of Lyon and Annecy, as well as the U.S., Italian, Canadian, and French Federations, the congregation of Argentina and that of Australia. Although the meeting was slated as being in three languages – English, French and Spanish – two more languages were also used –



Sr. Linda Pepe (USA) and Sr. Justine Senapati (India – Annecy) working at their computers

Italian and Portuguese. Translators were quite busy, and there was no lack of challenges for their skills! The meeting was capably and confidently directed by Sr. Griselda Martinez Morales, our CSJ-NGO at the United Nations, and facilitated by Sr. Gloria Philips of Argentina. Participants came from Haiti, India, Madagascar,

Australia, England, Algeria, Canada, Argentina, Italy, and the United States. During the meeting, we had the opportunity to experience the richness of cultural diversity, as participants shared their ministry and mission, and the lived reality of those with whom and to whom they minister. The evening socials were an exchange of song,



The participants, translators, organizers and support staff



Sisters from (l to r) Argentina, Algeria, Haiti and Italy work together

dance, and at times, food of the various cultures.

The intent of this Global JPIC group, which first met in 2000, is to bring all Sisters of St. Joseph together so that we might speak as one “Family of Joseph” on issues of injustice, both human and environmental. The focus of this year’s meeting was on our global family using their corporate voice at the United Nations, to call for systemic change for social and sustainable development with businesses and organizations on both the national and local levels. In order to help the participants better understand the focus of the meeting, Sr. Margaret

Mace, O.P., and Amanda Lyons, NGO representatives of the Dominicans and Franciscans, respectively, shared their UN expertise and experiences with the group.

One day was spent in New York City, including a tour of the U.N. Prior to the tour, the President of ECOSOC (the Economic and Social Council), Ambassador Sadjik of Austria, addressed the participants on the Sustainable Development Goals which will be embraced by the United Nations in 2015 when the MDG’s expire. Following this, Sr. Patty Johnson, Executive Director of the U.S. Federation, presented



Sr. Griselda Martinez-Morales welcomes Ambassador Sadjik

Ambassador Sadjik with a statement on “Engagement in Advocacy for Systemic Change” which the gathering had endorsed the previous day as representatives of the Congregations of St Joseph. This CSJ Statement expresses the partnership and commitment of the Federations, Congregations and Associations of the Sisters of Saint Joseph to work collaboratively with our NGO to promote economically fair and socially viable rights for all peoples. Before ending the meeting, the participants chose a core group from among its members, with representatives from Canada, Algeria and Australia. The function of this group will be to give further direction and focus to our commitment to work collaboratively with our NGO to promote the Sustainable Development Goals.

An Experience of Church in Oslo

Sr. Martina Gmunder, SSI
Anney congregation

I had the privilege of spending three months, March to May 2014, with the Sisters in Norway as part of a sabbatical experience. It was a time

during which I discovered many new things and had many new experiences, among them the celebration of Holy Week which included several moments of ecumenical prayer.

To begin, it might be interesting to situate the Catholic church in Norway. Although the Catholics are a very small minority in a Lutheran country, they are

very dynamic, young and international thanks to many immigrants from all over the world: Vietnam, Poland, Croatia, the Philippines, to mention only a few. Some have come as refugees, others, looking for work in Norway which is a wealthy country because of the oil in the North Sea. That makes a real “patchwork” church.



Sr. Marie-Kristin Riosianu (l.) of the Norwegian province with Sr. Martina Gmunder (r.)

This is clear since each Sunday up to 14 Masses are celebrated in different languages: Norwegian, English, Polish, Vietnamese, Tagalog (Philippines), Spanish, Croatian, French and in turn Ukrainian and Lithuanian. To give all these people an opportunity to meet, refreshments are served in the parish hall, with great animation, between the Masses. And when the Catholics need a bigger church for a special celebration, the Lutherans very obligingly lend them one of theirs.

On Palm Sunday Lutherans, Orthodox and Catholics met in an old graveyard near a small Orthodox church for an ecumenical palm celebration, a very colourful "affair" : the patriarch with his antique dress, the pastor in violet, the priest in red, the altar servers in black and white and one of the choirs in bright red frocks. The three celebrants

shared the Gospel reading, the blessing of the palms and the aspersion of the people. At the end, each confession went a different way for their mass, the Catholics being the biggest group. On Wednesday of Holy Week I went to Mariaholm, a beautiful diocesan-owned retreat center on the shores of a lake, with Father Neve, the sisters' chaplain who went to help with confessions for a group of 64 young people, ages 16-20. Every year such a group comes together for Holy Week, which is a very profound experience for these young Catholics from all over Norway, with some coming from the far north, which is the same distance from Oslo as is Rome. Strong bonds are created among them, an invaluable help for those who are very isolated in their Catholic faith. I was very impressed by the fervour and joy of all these youngsters : the Catholic

church of Norway today and tomorrow ! On Good Friday I joined the Way of the Cross, organized each year by the Lutherans. The gathering began at the central railway station around a big wooden cross, carried by different groups of young people. From there the procession went out, singing hymns and canticles, up the main shopping street in Oslo to the parliament, the courthouse, a newspaper publisher, Norwegian Caritas, the Salvation Army, and finally to a church where the cross was decorated with red roses. At each of these different places, Gospel readings were proclaimed and corresponding prayers offered. There were hundreds of people in the procession: all generations, from infants in prams to those in wheelchairs.

Even a few dogs walked quietly with their masters as if understanding the seriousness of the situation. For me it was a very powerful, prayerful way of the cross, walking in the town from places where important decisions are made in Norway to places where the poor and lonely are the first ones served and helped. This way of the cross was the people's work, with caring and decision making offered to the Lord.

Holy Week ended with the Easter Vigil, celebrated in community so all the Sisters, even those who are housebound, might assist. The Vigil was at 6 p.m. With sunshine still streaming, and the Easter fire burning there was plenty of light! The bells of a nearby protestant church were ringing, giving us an evening filled with Light, Peace, Joy.

Sr. Helma Flora Nadin (85)	Lagoa Vermelha	07/05/2014
Sr. Marie Dominique Morizot (98)	França	25/05/2014
Sr. Marie Goretti Kallappallil (84)	Tanmaya	29/05/2014
Sr. St. Jeanne d'Arc Monticolo (89)	França	07/06/2014
Sr. Luiza Sartor (75)	Caxias do Sul	11/06/2014
Sr. Maria Yolanda Diduch (97)	Paraná	15/06/2014

NEW
SAINTS

25th Mother Theodore Voiron Week

Sr. Vera Lúcia dos Santos

Province of São Paulo, Brazil

From May 18 to 24, 2014, the 25th Mother Mary Theodore Voiron Week was commemorated in the city of Itu, São Paulo, Brazil. The objective was to make Mother Theodore known and to pray for her beatification. This commemoration enjoys the patronage of the tourist office of Itu, through the secretary of tourism, leisure and events. Initiated through a municipal decree in December 1989, it is prepared and developed jointly with the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

Osmar Silveira Barbosa, who wrote the legislation, claims to have had the idea of creating this event when Mother Theodore was declared venerable. For him, one aspect of her life is particularly admirable: her expertise in educational, social and religious areas. He acknowledges the great contribution she made to the city of Itu. Among all her actions, especially notable is the opening of a school for the daughters of slaves. Mother Mary Theodore Voiron was born in Chambéry, France, in 1835. She entered the novitiate in 1852 and made perpetual vows in 1855. In the year 1859, she came to Brazil to replace the superior, Mother Mary Basília Genon, who had died during the trip from France to Brazil with the first group of missionaries. When she arrived in Brazil, the Bishop of Itu, Dom Antônio Joaquim de Mello, did not accept her as superior because he considered her too young. With the passage of time and realizing her qualities, he relented. She founded the College of our Lady of Patrocínio, which began operations in 1859. Later, she opened classes for black girls, so the daughters of slaves would have access to education. This was something



Sisters of the Province of São Paulo and lay people participating in the activities

unusual in the Brazilian context. Mother Theodore also founded several boarding schools for the education of girls throughout the State of São Paulo. In 1872, she was named Provincial and held the office for 50 years. She suffered a lot in the early years, going through difficulties in the areas of finances, adaptation to climate, food and even spiritual suffering. A woman of great faith and a great entrepreneur, she devoted her life to the neighbor through many charitable works. With her help, the Sisters of Saint Joseph ministered to the sick, girls and young women, abandoned children, orphans and the poor, the elderly, lepers, and slaves, through boarding schools, orphanages, homes for the elderly, hospitals, leprosaria and schools for poor girls.

The 25th Mother Mary Theodore Voiron

week included several activities, such as Eucharistic celebrations, a presentation by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Itu, testimonies from lay people about the life and work of Mother Theodore, interviews on local radio, and a solemn session in the Council Chamber for the presentation of the Mother Mary Theodore Voiron Medal and Diploma. The honoree was Doctor Luís Fernando Cuter, who helped transcribe the clinical health record of a child, born in 2007 facing imminent death, but who survived; this information was sent to Rome for analysis.

The process of Beatification and Canonization was opened in Rome, at the Holy See, December 10, 1964, and she was declared Venerable February 18, 1989. We are now awaiting a miracle accepted by Rome, allowing her to be beatified.



At left, Sister Geralda Neuza Hipólita (Secretary for the cause of Beatification of Mother Mary Theodore Voiron) and municipal authorities



Mother Mary Theodore Voiron Medal given to Doctor Luís Fernando Cuter

Frontier Mission in Northeast India

Sr. Harshita Joseph

Nirmala province, India

Responding to the spiritual and material needs of the time (Constitutions 5) as well as to our Provincial Chapter 2012 decisions, we of the Nirmala Province in India challenged ourselves to move to a remote part in the northeast of India to work with the poor and neediest to empower and uplift them. The 19th of March, 2014, marked the day when the new mission of Nongjri, Meghalaya, was inaugurated and blessed by Most Rev. Bishop Victor Lyndoh, Bishop of the Diocese of Nongstoin, in the presence of Sr. Augusta Mylackel, Provincial Superior, and her team.

Nongjri is a village situated in the interior of the Khasi Hills, difficult to reach due to very bad roads, which makes transport and communications difficult, especially during the monsoons. Located 1930 km (1158 mi) from the provincial house near Nagpur, an overland journey by train takes at least two full days and one night.

The inaugural function was simple, the people having prepared the Liturgy, a meal and also a short programme. They honoured the Bishop and the Sisters with shawls and presented gifts of household items from the little they possess. They had also built a bamboo house for the sisters to provide them with the basic necessities. It was very meaningful to see and experience the life of the Khasi people.

The people of Nongjri, belonging to the Khasi tribes, are Catholics and have a deep faith in God. They are strong in their Khasi culture and beliefs. Theirs is a matrilineal society where the mother, not the father, owns the children and the property. A very close knit people and always generous in lending a helping



Sr. Augusta and her team along with Srs. Harshita, Felicity, the Parish priest and some sisters from the Pachmarhi Province working in Meghalaya

hand to one another, they cultivate rice, potatoes, ginger, and grass. The new community is comprised of three Sisters: a teacher, a nurse and one engaged in pastoral and social care. They work in collaboration with the OFM Fathers (Order of Friars Minor, Bangalore Province), who took up this mission in February 2014, making Nongjri a parish.

The presence of Srs. Augusta, Deepika and Ophelia at the inaugural function gave the newly formed community a deep sense of support and encouragement to go forward in the challenging mission of

Nongjri. The presence of the sisters from the Pachmarhi province who are working nearby in Mawkyntew, Meghalaya, Sr. Rita, Celine and Nirmala, added much joy to the celebration and led to a strong experience of our charism of unity.



Khasi people and students performing to welcome the sisters

Transform Your Work into Smiles

Sr. Andréa Dalaqua Goulart
Province of Lagoa Vermelha, Brazil

“LET’S RECYCLE DONATED TOYS AND BOOKS OF CHILDREN’S STORIES AND TRANSFORM THIS WORK INTO SOLIDARITY AND SOCIAL ACTION FOR NEEDY CHILDREN!”

This was the inspiration for creating the “Toy Shop,” the initiative of a few people who wished to devote part of their lives and their time to the cause of children who lacked the possibility of a dignified childhood. At the same time, the group wanted to develop a sustainable ecological action, caring for the environment in which they live. These efforts are gradually growing. Sisters and lay persons have become partners in this initiative which has about 30 people involved. The project has several objectives: to defend the right of children to play; to promote equal opportunity; to create references to childhood through the distribution of toys and books; to collect, restore and make cloth dolls; and to emphasize the importance of recycling for the environment and, consequently, for the well-being of all. The project has caught the interest of people of different ages, from 3 to 95 years. This integration of generations is good for everyone, especially our sisters, who are the oldest in the group. We have the witness of some women, mothers who bring their children to the “Toy Shop,” desiring to awaken in their young ones a sense of values and care for a sustainable world. It also

provides an experience of sharing, solidarity and social commitment through understanding that every child has rights. The group meets in the community of the Sisters of Saint Joseph - Soledad, in Vacaria, in southern Brazil, on Saturday afternoon. There, each participant, according to what they choose, works freely with others and gives the fruit of their work to children in need. Each person feels free to put their gifts at the service of children and a healthier environment. The project counts on the partnership of the municipality, the state, private schools, youth leadership groups, companies in the municipality and region, the Municipal Secretary for the Environment and Agenda 21, for the collection of materials and toys, as well as the dissemination of this initiative. All the material collected is taken to the workshop where the sorting, cleaning and sewing takes place, along with making dolls’ clothes, teddy bear restoration, repairing toys with wheels, checking the operation of electronic



Sister Andréa (second left) and volunteers cutting fabric and sewing

toys, and other activities for the repair and reusing of toys and books collected. All this work culminates annually, with the distribution of toys, books and smiles to needy children, on their day in October. Social values are also part of the project through pooling human and Christian values, underscoring the importance of sustainability and caring for natural resources. When delivering the books and toys, the group goes to where the children live, providing everyone with smiles, joy and celebration. The members of the project, happy to be able to have a noble reason for their activity, feel productive to be engaged in the promotion of human beings in the image and likeness of God.



Assembling the rag dolls that will be delivered to children

A Time of Self-Knowledge and Spiritual Growth

Sr. Jamila Hermas and
Sr. Sana Thomas
Pakistan

During this last year, from September 2, 2013 to May 30, 2014, we, the temporary professed sisters of the Pakistan region, Jamila Hermas and Sana Thomas, joined the “Inter-Congregational Formation Programme” in Lahore. This programme, organized by the Jesuits for those preparing for Final Profession, was held at Loyola Hall. These nine months were a grace-filled time of being “pregnant with God’s word and preparing personally to give birth” for love, peace and joy to reign.

We were nursed and nurtured in the company of learned, holy people, with their knowledge broadening our view of the world, religious life and ourselves. All the topics presented and reflected on by us helped us to grow in love of God, self and the dear neighbor. The program addressed all aspects of our life and helped us to recognize and explore the reality of who we are so each of us can better actualize and live our individual selves. We clarified our own identity, responding to the question “Who am I?” and thus grew in self-awareness. The professors offered many practical ways to become aware of the mystic and prophet we each are. The aspect of mystic leads us to maturity and purification in religious life, while the prophetic element encourages us to stand for the truth and live an authentic life. We learned that spirituality is an art, leading us to see the whole of creation with God’s eyes. In this spiritual journey we came to understand the wisdom of reflecting on our own thoughts and deeds. The many topics, including Johannine



literature, ethics, religious life, missiology, ecology and feminism, led us to an awareness of God in all things, and how our actions and words have power and affect the entire cosmos. The statement made by one of our professors: “Someone is interested in you, and that someone is Jesus” deeply touched us, making us more conscious of Jesus’ intentional presence in our lives. Having been with sisters from different congregations, we came to a deeper pride and appreciation of our own charism. Our love for our congregation

grew, as did our conviction of the importance of living the challenges of our times. During this year we felt the support of all the sister of the region of Pakistan who followed us with their interest and prayers. We were very grateful to have Sisters Shakila and Nasreen, who live in Lahore, to accompany us on this spiritual journey during which we experienced personal transformation. Stimulated by the many graces of this year, we are open to whatever ways God may ask us to serve.



Spiritual Leadership in Challenging Times

Sr. Barbara Bozak
USA

Leadership and the qualities of an effective leader are much-discussed topics in contemporary society. Among the styles or models of leadership deemed most effective are servant leadership, transformational leadership and circular leadership. The Leadership Conference of Women Religious in the US is now joining this conversation, offering their insights through the discussion of "Spiritual Leadership," a way of being in the world which is contemplation-based and collaborative.

At a day-long conference in Washington D.C. on June 7, 2014, four former leaders of religious congregations addressed this topic. Sponsored by "Solidarity with Sisters," an organization that sprang up in response to the Apostolic Visitation and the Vatican's Doctrinal Assessment which accused the Leadership Conference of undermining church doctrine, the event saw an equal number of laity and religious gathered for conversation.

Sister Marie McCarthy opened the day speaking about the three contexts in which spiritual leadership has emerged: developments in science, theories of leadership, and the experience of women religious as they renewed religious life in response to Vatican II. Grounded in this, she outlined four attitudes which underpin spiritual

leadership: a contemplative stance in order to avoid judging or explaining prematurely; the centrality of relationship made visible in inclusivity and collegiality; solidarity with the poor and marginalized; engaging with process in order to live into the questions and readjust decisions. This powerful presentation was followed by a facilitated conversation of three former presidents of LCWR, who offered numerous practical suggestions and examples of how they have engaged in spiritual leadership. They noted that when a group is gathered for decision making it is important to be aware and respectful of minority opinions, to name the fears and hopes of all around the table and to be aware of our resistance to change. They emphasized the importance of being grounded in prayer and silence as well as understanding



Marie McCarthy, SP, addresses the group

the perspective of the other person and moving forward without fear. Their insights encouraged all present to develop their leadership with a contemplative and collaborative stance.



The participants listen attentively

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