

French

English

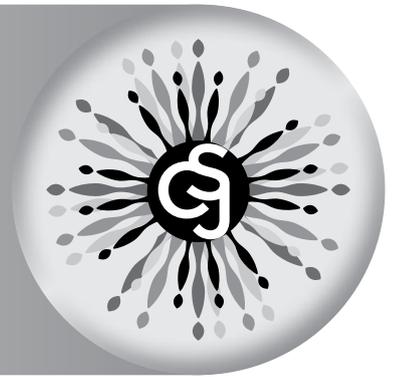
Italian

Portuguese

Norwegian

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GENERAL COUNCIL

The Historical Journey of the Constitutions



S. Clementina Copia
General Councilor

Last year when putting order in the archives at the Generalate, I became aware of some historical information about the various editions of the constitutions. Unaware of what I would find, I came across a well-preserved box at the back of the archives. I did not expect that upon opening it, I would find a few versions of our constitutions, dating back to the 19th century. I was very happy to see them. As we all know, the

first constitutions were written by Father Médaille between 1650 and 1653-54. At that time, the ecclesiastical authority upon which the Sisters depended was a bishop or an ecclesiastical director appointed by the bishop. These constitutions were first approved in 1665 by Bishop Armand de Béthune, successor to Bishop de Maupas. They were printed for the first time in Vienne in 1694, with the approval of Bishop Henri de Villars. This edition integrated into the primitive constitutions some notes of Father Médaille, written after the constitutions, remarks made by Bishop de Maupas at his Conference of 1661, and other new concepts related

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to the development of communities of Sisters. In comparison to the primitive constitutions, vocabulary was modified, but the pillars of the spiritual and apostolic life remained basically the same. This edition of 1694 was reprinted, with the permission of Bishop de Neuville de Villeroy, by the community of Lyon in 1730, then in 1788, and in 1819. After the French Revolution in the first half of the 19th century, the same edition spread to all the congregations. The essential points of these constitutions were in force in most congregations in France and in other countries, until the Second Vatican Council. The first congregation to modify the constitutions of Father Médaille was the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry. As a result of our expansion in the world and our missionary work, the congregation presented to the Holy See (1856) new constitutions, which

were approved in 1861 and again in 1875. In 1917 with the new edition of Canon Law, the Holy Father at that time requested that all congregations revise their constitutions in conformity to the new law of the Church. Our congregation revised the text and an edition was approved by the Holy See in 1921. During the years after the Second World War, the Superior General and the Council revised the text of the constitutions for a more reasonable redistribution and a more precise version, and to introduce further changes. A request was made to the Holy See, and approval was received in 1951. With the advent of Vatican II, all congregations were encouraged to return to their founding charism and to review their constitutions, in light of the new spirit that the Council had brought with it. The current constitutions were drawn up

and received the approval of the Holy See in 1984, within only a few months of the new code of Canon Law in 1983. What thoughts emerge in our minds after reading these few lines of history? Maybe we think that sometimes writing many dates is boring and says little, but dates often show an underlying dynamism and movement. Dynamism and movement of the spirit are the two realities that have accompanied the historical evolution of our constitutions, defining and maintaining our identity over time. The constitutions journey with us. They are not fixed nor a book of laws written once and valid forever. They contain the whole vision and dynamism of our spirituality and our charism, but at the same time, they examine the signs of the times, reflecting the different temporal realities and different apostolic and missionary appeals.

PROVINCE/REGION/MISSION

Rights Education for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS

S. Philomena Pichapilly

Province of Nagpur, India

On December 10th, World HIV/AIDS Day was celebrated among our people. Everywhere in the World we remember to teach about how to prevent this deadly disease. Young people, women, men are warned about the need of being aware and to be conscious that one can contract the HIV virus through carelessness or being too innocent.

This year we decided to contact the people living with HIV/AIDS in various villages and slums of Nagpur. Sr. Philomena, advocate and social worker,



S. Philomena addresses the group concerning their rights

together with the protestant church which is involved in taking care of persons living with HIV/AIDS, organized a three hour session with them on December 10th, 2014.

About 300 persons living with HIV/AIDS were gathered for the session. All of them were living in the peripheries of the society, involved in daily wage earning

through manual work, they shared their feeling of horror and helplessness when they came to know they had HIV/AIDS. One woman shared how she was expelled from her matrimonial home by her in-laws, even-though both her husband and she herself tested positive with the HIV virus. Her mother-in-law blamed her, accusing her of bringing

the illness and destroying her husband. Her husband, a truck driver, had known he was affected by the deadly virus but got married, hiding the fact. A middle aged man shared how he was sorry for his licentious living, sharing many partners at different places for his sexual gratification, and now his wife too is affected by HIV/AIDS. A young lady stood up to share that she was dismissed by the employer from her job because she disclosed that she was an HIV/AIDS patient. One family was not willing to share property with their HIV/AIDS affected son, though the law states that every member of the family has a share in the ancestral property.

Sr. Philo and the other advocates who were present told the persons living with HIV/AIDS about the various legal provisions that would help them. The children living with HIV/AIDS have a right to be admitted to school, to enjoy "Free and Compulsory Education." Like any other children they have the right to the mid-day Meal Scheme.

The right to live with dignity is fundamental to all persons, including those living with HIV/AIDS. They also have



Women listen attentively to the presentations

the right to life, the right to liberty, to medical care, and the right to free legal aid to get their legitimate rights through appropriate legal procedures.

We also explained the right of women to protection from violence in the matrimonial home. The women and all vulnerable sections of society have access to free legal assistance to get their legitimate rights through the court, mediation, or pre-litigation. They only

have to approach the District Legal Services Authority with their complaints. Each of their doubts was clarified and all were satisfied with the interactions. They all felt happy and one said that she was overwhelmed by the attitude of the organizers and did not feel the burden of being a patient. She heard legal provisions for the first time and vouched to approach the free legal aid system and let others know of this.

Attention to the Elderly

S. Maria Goreti Gonçalves
Province of São Paulo, Brazil

The growing number of elderly persons in situations of fragility, needing help to live with autonomy and independence, is leading society to offer more and better conditions for old age with dignity. Looking at the growth in numbers of persons over 60 years old, places Brazil, within 25 years, as having the sixth largest elderly population in the world in absolute numbers. There is an urgent need to preemptively adopt measures to deal with this. We know that the government of the State of São Paulo has been developing, since 2004, a program for monitoring the elderly. At the



2014 Group in the Social Phase – Sister Maria Goreti on the right

national level, we know of other related initiatives. Personally, I felt challenged and became engaged in this mission area.

The work we do is in cooperation with the Congregation of Claretian Missionaries of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which in the

breadth of its charism, also embraces the cause of “attention to the elderly.” With the firm purpose of being an active presence in this mission, I sought out training at the school of nursing of the University of São Paulo and, in addition, was an observer at the first course for caregivers, with a class of 15 students. I took advantage of Saint Joseph Nursing School in our province, while being accompanied by a professor at the university. It was challenging work in terms of curricular requirements. Since then, I have assumed the coordination of

Claretian sponsored courses, along with other professionals in the area. The first course was held in 2010. Since then, many have sought to take the course for caregivers of the elderly. Those seeking training are very diverse and vary from 18 to 65 years of age. It is interesting that even elderly people consider taking the course. The classes have 35 to 40 students, with a predominance of women. The focus of the course is the development of skills and abilities relating to the proper care of elderly people in various situations.

In five years of activities, 16 groups of caregivers of the elderly have been trained already, and most participants are working in the area. In February 23, 2015, a new class started, with 45 students enrolled. The course takes place from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., three days a week for three months. Our expectation is that this work of vocational training provides not only theoretical and practical knowledge necessary for the proper care of older people, but also favors an increase in years of healthy living.

Missionary Experience in Savoy

S. Deepa Dung Dungand and
S. Pooja Swami
France

Responding to a call for a missionary presence in Savoy, we, Sisters Pooja and Deepa left our home in India to have an experience of life in France for six months. For the first month we stayed with the community at Bois Joli, from where we were ‘missioned’ to different small communities to see, experience, learn and discover the realities and mission of our Sisters in Savoy. We were deeply inspired to see our elderly sisters in large communities, who, even though they do not work professionally anymore, are so active, vibrant and dynamic in living the charism and spirit of our founder within and outside the community walls. They are missionary through their prayers and in their very presence, by welcoming people into the community, helping the poor by making articles for sale, preparing post cards for prisoners. Sr. Agnes Moussiere (91 years old) had much patience in teaching us the language. The sisters helped us with French and did their best to make us feel at home. Their sharing, stories, narrating the history of our congregation and the French province, and telling us the traditions and culture of the French

people, helped us to adjust. In the small communities we could see how the sisters work with lay people in several associations like Caritas, “Resto du Cœur” (Restaurants of the Heart). They also visit and take communion to the home-bound and to the sick in hospitals. Some sisters are engaged in Pastoral work and share Bible classes. Several sisters help immigrants with their papers, some offering them French lessons.

Living for six months in different communities was a blessing! It was a sharing of life, mission, culture and challenges of the present time. We were accepted and appreciated by both people outside and sisters within community. Through this we became aware of the valuable presence of the sisters among the people, witnessing to Gospel values by living simply and concretising our charism. From day one, it was a new experience of everything. At times, we found it difficult facing a new language, and great differences in food and climate. Sometimes we really struggled to say a



word or a sentence to explain something. Such experiences were discouraging and left us feeling isolated and longing for what was left behind. But our personal prayer and the encouragement of the sisters empowered us to go ahead. We were given the opportunity to attend regular classes in Lyon for twenty days, where we interacted with many students of other nationalities. It was interesting to know about their culture, habits and festivals. We gained a lot from these classes, a very unique experience. Now, returning to India, we shall continue our discernment to see where God is calling us at this time.

The Dream of Gender Equality

S. Barbara Bozak
USA

Over 9,000 women from around the world gathered at the UN headquarters in New York, March 9-20, 2015 for the 59th meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women. The theme of this annual event was “Beijing + 20” or “Implementing the Beijing Platform for Action” which had two main concerns: gender equality and the empowerment of women. In order to achieve these two goals the Platform for Action called all countries to address twelve areas of concern, including violence against women, women in power and decision making, women in poverty, education and the economy. While ministers gave official reports in the General Assembly hall on what their government had done in the past 20 years to improve the situation of women, grassroots organizations addressed not only what has been achieved but also what needs to be done. Amazingly, because of so many men being killed in the Rwandan genocide,



Member of the Afghan Women's Network speak to the role of women

women have an important role in the government, the economy and the workforce. On the other hand, women in Iraq and Afghanistan fear losing ground in the rights they have gained in the recent past because of the violence and the growing power of groups that aim to control women.

No country has achieved the goals set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Giovanna Martelli, Minister for Equal Opportunity in Italy, noted the persistent violence against women in Italy and recognized that no single country can bring an end to this scourge. A global response is needed. In fact a topic addressed by many groups was that of

violence against women – both domestic violence and the violence of trafficking. Every country faces these challenges, even those that have strong laws against such violence. What is lacking in many places is the political will to enforce the law. Furthermore there is often a culture which accepts the violence or encourages silence. Interestingly, in Norway, a country where gender equality is enshrined in law, immigrant women report domestic violence more frequently than Norwegian women.

Migrant women, both those migrating within their own country and those going to other countries, even when invited to work in healthcare professions, face more roadblocks to achieving equality. They lack access to information and to services offered to others. A significant number of migrant women are employed in the service sector, hold low-paying jobs and many are kept in virtual slavery by their employers.

No country has achieved gender parity. Even in the most developed countries, women's salaries are lower than those of men, for equal work. The goal of gender balance in government and decision-making positions has yet to be reached. Much has been achieved, but much is still to be done. Laws are important to bring about change, but until every person embraces the values in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, women's equality will remain a dream.



Listening to how EU members are dealing with violence against women

LAC India - Strengthening the Charism

S. Prashanti Janagam

Province of Nagpur, India

The Temporary Professed sisters of the LAC (Lyon – Annecy – Chambéry) communities of India gathered at Snehalaya, Nagpur, India Dec. 28, 2014 – Jan. 1, 2015 for a five-day seminar. This being the Year of Consecrated Life, the theme of the five-day seminar was “Wake Up the World!” Strong, practical references were made to the Apostolic Letter of Pope Francis to men and women religious around the globe on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, which, in its 6th Chapter, speaks of Religious Life and of the Decree *Perfectae Caritatis* or the Renewal of Religious Life. S. David Delaney, the resource person, invited us to Look to the Past with Gratitude, the Present with Passion and the Future with Hope. Together we were challenged to Wake Up the World as Daughters of Fr. Jean Pierre Médaille in the 21 Century. We, young, temporary professed women religious were challenged all through the seminar to live up to our commitment



by keeping our charism, spirituality and origins alive and relevant today. Talking to young religious who are the future of our Congregations, Pope Francis tells us to offer freshness and generosity in our YES to God by strengthening our own leadership and dialoguing with previous generations to be enriched by their wisdom and experience so as to find new ways of living the Gospel, in order to effectively witness to Proclamation today. The topics dealt with in order to “Wake Up the World” were deep, reflective and practical, dealt with in input sessions, sharing, group discussion, personal testimonies. They included presentations on inner freedom and conversion, which help us to be transformed and transparent in the 21st century, for quality, interpersonal relationships; nurturing our

charism and building communion with God, our dear neighbour in community and mission, in the footsteps of Fr. Médaille; reimagining our vows to passionately, convincingly and fearlessly launch out into frontline ministries and reach the peripheries of our fractured world; fortifying our youthful leadership to be creative, innovative and confident in community and mission. The General and Provincial Chapter thrusts of LAC were also highlighted. One evening we watched the Chambéry document of “The Journey”; how the congregation began in Kamptee, India in 1854. Lighter moments of sharing in the refectory and a hearty recreation on Dec 30 brought us all together in fun, laughter, joy acting, singing and dancing.

NEW
SAINTS

S. Marie Clara Pille (94)	Denmark	21/12/2014
S. Peter Damian Puliallil (83)	Nirmala	27/12/2014
S. Marie Raphaël Germain (89)	France	31/12/2014
S. Marie Clotilde Longeret (92)	France	10/01/2015
S. Maria São Clemente A. de França (94)	São Paulo	19/01/2015
S. Rosalia Theresa Pegoraro (89)	Caxias do Sul	21/01/2015
S. Mary Rosita Francis (79)	Nirmala	22/01/2015
S. Thérèse Degiron (95)	France	22/01/2015
S. Francisca Marcondes Gil (96)	São Paulo	04/02/2015
S. Aidee Fernandez (89)	Caxias do Sul	06/02/2015
S. Elisa Maria Lermen (96)	Lagoa Vermelha	09/02/2015
S. Luiza Celeste Biazus (87)	Porto Alegre	20/02/2015
S. Marie Paul Perrier (95)	France	20/02/2015
S. Marita Gestelkamp (89)	Denmark	27/02/2015
S. Iracema Maria Bianchi (93)	Porto Alegre	23/03/2015
S. Aurea Maria de Arruda Mello (93)	São Paulo	25/03/2015

Mission Experience in Mozambique

S. Severina Lucia Brogliato
Mozambique

Sister Severina is Brazilian, from the N/NE Region of Brazil, and a skilled missionary. She returned to Brazil in 2015. The Sisters of the community say she bears witness to deep prayer, with frequent participation in the Eucharist. She has an intense love for the poorest and most excluded and is very committed to them.

There are many memories I keep in my heart and carry with me from this mission in Mozambique. I remember how I felt a great desire to leave for a mission, 'ad gentes,' but the most significant call came through a retreat in 2007. At the retreat house, there was a sentence in Italian that struck me, "Cosa farò per Christo?" (What will I do for Christ?). It was immediately

in response to this appeal that, upon returning to my community, I wrote to the Coordinator of the N/NE Region in Brazil, sharing my desire. Having taken care of everything with the São Paulo province, which is responsible for the Mission in Mozambique, three months later I received the reply that I could join the community in Mocimboa da Praia. My arrival in Mocimboa da Praia in 2008 was the realization of this 'something greater,' and it meant entering a new world, a new culture, and a different way of being. The country uses Portuguese as the official language, but the people in their homes and villages speak their native languages. The liturgies are full of life with singing and dancing. They are quite lengthy, with the celebrations taking hours. The women, especially the poorest, are the ones who provide for the home, sowing and harvesting in their fields. They are very submissive to men, mainly because of the many early and young marriages organized by the family. It is a culture that still has many traces of the authoritarian system where power is centralized in the Chief. There are,

however, significant movements of women to move out of this situation and have more space in politics and in society. The rates of infant mortality and diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS are high. Poverty and hunger aggravate the situation, leaving many people with few prospects for the future. Over time, I discovered what it means to truly be a missionary with a people who, even when surrounded by poverty and disease, are captivating. They are a simple, warm, cheerful people, who evangelized me through their simplicity and openness of heart, and who are willing to share their faith in Jesus Christ. This was enriching for me as beautiful signs of the Kingdom. The missionary spirit called me to listen, to accept with my heart the feelings, the wishes and hopes of this people. The reason for my missionary life was to witness that God is love. The experience I had in Mozambique in these six and a half years while visiting the sick, accompanying people to the hospital, sharing knowledge of homemade medicine, valuing and encouraging small gestures to increase self-esteem, and visiting communities in the city and in the countryside, taught me to live the Gospel and to be the face of God for those who crossed my path.



Sister Severina contributing in the kindergarten project



Sister Severina animating the São José community

An Attack on the Heart of a Country

S. Sadaf Patras

Pakistan

Pakistan is a country which was established 68 years ago with the hope that the land will be a land of peace and prosperity. For decades it has cherished this joy of establishment where sincerity flowed and it became a stable Islamic state, but with the passage of time it lost the purpose for which it was created and now it is under the influence of corruption, negative political strategies, prejudices and unjust laws against minorities and the poor. At the same time it has been suffering from severe threats of terrorism for two decades. Practically every day there are murders, target killings, suicide attacks, bombings and other kinds of terrorism. Daily, many innocent people become the victims of brutality. Seeing this fragile situation the Army took the lead and negotiated with the government and started operations against the terrorists. There have been rumours everywhere “there will be severe reactions from the terrorists”. True enough, when all was calm and peaceful, 16th Dec 2014, appeared as a dark day for our country when seven gunmen affiliated with the Talban conducted a terrorist attack on the Army Public School in the north-western Pakistani city of Peshawar. They entered the school and opened fire on school staff and children, killing 145 people, including 132 school



children (all boys), ranging between eight and eighteen years of age. A rescue operation was launched by the Pakistan Army's Special Services Group, Special Forces, who killed all seven terrorists and rescued 960 people. And there were at least 130 people injured in the attack. This news spread like a fire in the country. Every citizen was grieving over what happened. For several days there was mourning and weeping not only by the parents and relatives of the victims, but the whole country felt deeply injured. For the first time even the political parties joined hands and forces to eradicate terrorism from Pakistan because this time they had attacked the heart of Pakistan. Everyone was in tears and traumatised by this shocking news. In every street flowers signified the funerals and thousands of Pakistanis participated in these funerals without any thought of caste or creed. The students of the Army Public School were considered the future of Pakistan with great dreams for their future. For

months there were documentary films shown on every TV channel telling the stories of the dreams that these students had. Yet within a few hours not only were dreams shattered but precious lives were lost. Daily now every tongue expresses the hope that such extreme violence never be repeated.

Pakistan security forces have given an alarm to all the schools and their service has become more effective as they have increased protection for every government and private school alike. Yet there is an air of fear and insecurity among the children, parents and school authorities. All the schools are strictly following these security measures regarding how to deal with similar situations.

The mothers of the victims pray that this tragic incident may not knock at the door of any other mother. At the same time every citizen of Pakistan is praying for the safety of their children and their beloved relations, that God will protect the future of our country from these extremists.

EDITING

Barbara Bozak
Andréia Pires

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Andréia Pires

TRANSLATIONS

Agnès Moussière
Cristina Gavazzi
Joyce Baker
Margherita Corsino
Maria Elisabete Reis
Marie-Kristin Riosianu
Marie-Pierre Ruche

CIRCULATION

Rosalia Armillotta
www.csjchambery.org

E-MAIL

icc@csjchambery.org