

French

**English**

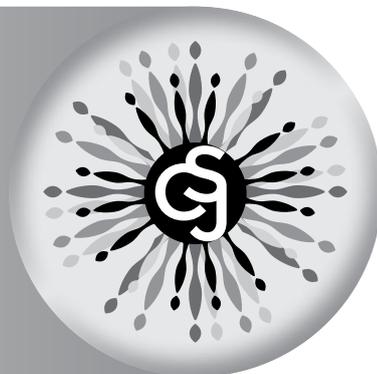
Italian

Portuguese

Norwegian

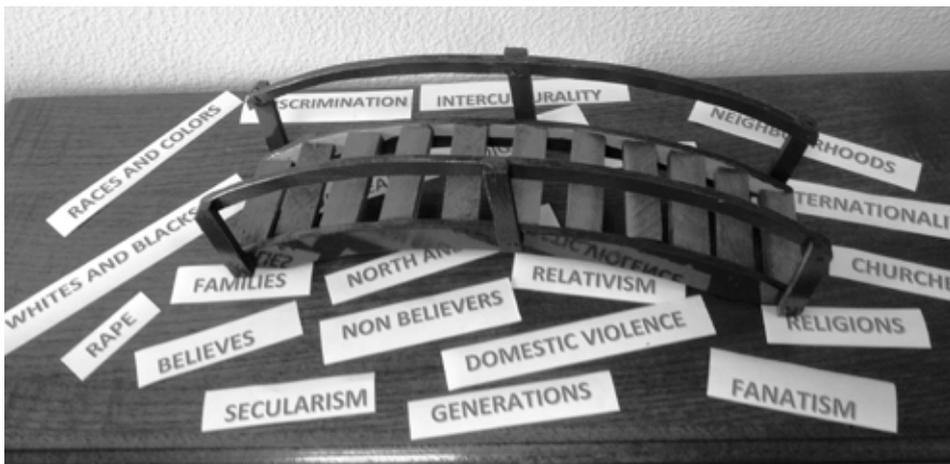
# CSJOURNAL

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry  
March - April • Year 2016 - n. 2



## GENERAL COUNCIL

# The Impact of the Annual Evaluations: Institutional Vitality and Responsiveness



**Sr. Ieda Maria Tomazini**  
*General Council*

One of the first engrossing activities of the General Council has been reading about the life and mission of the Sisters in the various Provinces, Regions and Missions, known as the Annual Evaluation. As the Sisters delineate the most important decisions, the signs of greatest vitality, the challenges faced and the planning for the following year, what is revealed is the life that exists as well as the efforts to make our Charism of Unity visible. The exercise of reading each of the reviews carefully made us realize that the signs of greatest vitality and institutional responsiveness were found

in those Provinces, Regions and Missions that showed, as both priority and practice, missionary expansion in all stages of life, the commitment to those most in need and investment in both theological and spiritual training as professionals. One of the consequences of this choice is perceived in the commitment to the process of evangelization, insertion among youth and renewed vocation animation. Another fact to be highlighted is the growing awareness of being and living on mission, regardless of age and physical or mental condition. Our Sisters express this especially by persevering in prayer, reading our CSJournal and looking at the world reality with interest. Another important point to highlight is the approach to the impact of social, political

## SUMMARY

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and economic realities in each of the 17 countries where our Sisters are present. There are complex and controversial realities that put into question our ability to dare, to be more generous, and to see beyond the horizon, to see mission areas in need of the presence of the gift of Unity and Reconciliation. Would we be willing to leave our comfortable professional work, our successful pastoral activity, our secure positions as women who have retired or who are older than 60, for example, and go to serve the people of God? Would we be willing to go to those who suffer many forms of violence, who are lost, who are victims of terrorist attacks, who are manipulated, who are migrants from one nation to another, impoverished, having no voice and who are increasingly indifferent to the faith and Christian values? Would we be willing and ready to be, ourselves, the bridges that promote the holy encounter between people of different races, colors, nationalities, beliefs, to be bridges that question the building of walls or the walls that already exist within our own communities?

Being ready to leave not only implies the physical movement from one geographical area to another, but also the ability to identify the walls or barriers that we tend to build within religious life, in our homes or work environments. The walls people tend to build are so many and so creative, walls of defense, of protection, of misunderstanding, of intolerance, of



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accommodation! Instead of protecting us, they separate us, keep us from each other and make us unrecognizable because they favor isolation. These walls, more than a protection, are an obstacle to the visibility and expansion of our charism. Pope Francis, on the occasion of his visit to Bolivia and also to the United States, said “the nation that seeks the common good cannot close in upon itself,” and he added that today it is essential to develop ways to encourage frank and open dialogue about the issues and avoid sharp conflict between peoples. He continually emphasizes in his speeches that we need

to build bridges!

The experience of being immersed in each of the realities of our Provinces, Regions and Missions through the Annual Evaluations brought to mind the reflections in the 2015 General Chapter in Rome. One of them was the challenge of building, being and becoming bridges ourselves, bridges capable of going beyond differences and respecting the singularities of each culture and social reality, to be bridges that support the “sacrament of encounter,” based on the word of God, having us live as women reconciled and reconciling.

## PROVINCE/REGION/MISSION

# Daring to Risk

**Sr. Philomena Pichappilly**

*Province of Nagpur, India*

**H**uman Trafficking is a worldwide problem with the trafficking of women and children rampant in all countries whether rich or poor, developed or underdeveloped. An estimated 135,000 children are trafficked in India

annually - many from India's remote rural areas to be sold in cities to work as domestic aides. Girls and women are the main targets of trafficking in India, many for sexual exploitation which takes various forms including brothel-based prostitution, sex tourism and pornography. Prostitution affects the rights of women. Victims of sex trafficking suffer from adverse physical

and psychological health conditions and are socially disadvantaged. Since sex trafficking is a critical health issue with broad social implications that require both medical and legal attention, medical and legal personnel can help victims in various ways.

Sr. Philomena Pichappilly has undertaken the mission to help sex workers to be free from the clutches that enslave them.

A few legal experts and social workers surveyed an area situated in the city of Nagpur to verify the conditions of brothels where more than ten thousand women are kept for commercial sex work. It was difficult to enter the area but with frequent and regular visiting hours for a few days we befriended women who live there and heard their stories. Many are affected with AIDS. Several had small children to care for and are constrained to manage customers and their small children at the same time. One of them told how she ties her two-year old son under her bed and sedates him when engaged in sex work with the customer. Some expressed their wish to remove the children and place them in any hostel so that they may not become like them. Some said that they were brought here by pimps who promised good job opportunities, but were cheated. Now they have no other option but to continue in this to earn their livelihood. Many of them support their families with this income and have to pay rent for the room which they occupy for the business.

Listening to each of them was a shocking experience for us, social workers and legal personnel. An awareness program was organized for



*Social worker (l.) working with prostitutes in Nagpur*

the sex workers with more than 500 attending. Students of the various social work colleges staged a play on the theme of education, job opportunities and skill training. A young woman, who chose to leave the brothel, shared confidently her experience and how liberated she feels as one knowing human dignity. Two others shared similar experiences. This is the second year we are endeavoring to empower these women who have been enslaved as sex workers and have been able to help several to

enroll in various courses like nursing, social work, accountancy. Several have moved to hostels and have sent their children to school. Although I was confused at first about whether I should visit them and interact with them, I was reassured in this ministry by our constitution which says “. . . we as Sisters of St. Joseph . . . are challenged by the Word of God, the call of the Church and the world and especially the needs of the poor,” who live in the peripheries of society.

## Women Meet at the UN

**Sr. Barbara Bozak**

USA

Any visitor to the United Nations in New York during the days of March 14-24, 2016 was greeted by the vision of thousands of women from around the world who had gathered there for the 60th Commission on the Status of Women. The theme of this year’s meeting was “Women’s Empowerment and Its Link to Sustainable Development.” With the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the UN Assembly in September 2015, as a backdrop, both official and parallel meetings gave particular emphasis to Goal 5: “Achieve



*Pat Lucas, CSJ (Brentwood, NY) talking with young women from Argentina*

gender equality and empower all women and girls.” Yet, whether the issue is ending poverty (Goal 1), achieving food security (Goal 2), equitable quality education (Goal 4), safe cities (Goal 11), or peaceful and inclusive societies (Goal 16) all of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are relevant to women’s life and well-being. Every country in the world, from the most developed to the least developed, is challenged to achieve these goals by 2030, which will be possible only if women are truly partners in the process. During the March meeting it was repeated many times that women and girls are among those to suffer most from war, human trafficking, environmental degradation and inequality. The topics addressed over the nine days included

the importance of women in decision-making at all levels of society, the need to address and end all forms of gender-based violence, and ways to hear the voices of women from across the world. Some women told their stories of being trafficked. The International Labor Organization noted that trafficking in persons is more profitable than oil. There were examples of how violence has been addressed in some places. In the United Kingdom there are campaigns and programs to educate young women about healthy relationships and to teach them that lack of respect and emotional abuse are not to be tolerated. Groups such as the Advocates for Human Rights have used their expertise to help local groups establish civil and legal procedures to assure that laws against domestic

violence are effectively implemented, with a woman from Moldova giving a concrete example of how this has been done. The establishment of such procedures is important because legislation may exist, but is often ineffective.

Much is being done for women’s equality but much still needs to be done. Violence against women takes many forms and is found in every country, be it sexual harassment, domestic violence or some form of slavery. The Commission on the Status of Women is important to bring these issues to light and to help groups find ways to collaborate and be effective advocates for change. What is clear is that everyone in every country needs to be aware of what is happening and do their part to work for justice and human dignity.

## Mission as Promotion of Life

**Sisters Valesca de Mesquita Orzi  
and Josiane Motta Coelho**  
*Tanzania*



*Young women weaving coats*

The reality of teenagers from the village of Msalaba Mkuu, Tanzania, is that many have babies when they are very young. This is a cause of concern and challenges us to seek a way to collaborate so that this reality can slowly be changed. Young mothers, as they leave the school, depend on their parents, and they are often poor, without the conditions necessary to care for their children. The only option for them is hard work on the farm. Considering this, in 2015, we asked CSJMissioni (an organization of our Sisters of the Italian Province) for a contribution allowing us to develop a new project to help these young people.

The proposal was to establish a group for making winter coats, because there is a demand, and there is no one to make these garments. Then, we selected, with

the help of the community, four young women to start the first group. They did a six-month course to learn the craft. Our criterion for selection was young teenagers who had left the school early due to pregnancy. In November 2015, they finished the course and started to work. In no time, these young women began to produce coats according to orders coming in, and their family income improved. The result, which is gratifying for those who had the idea for the

project, is to see how they have changed their lives, to see the new and positive expression on their faces and the growth of self-esteem. Then they move from being dependent on their families to begin to contribute to the family’s needs. An example that illustrates this is that of a young woman with a small baby who, living in her sister’s house, was being helped by this family member. After doing the course, she discovered her gifts and abilities. Being a quick learner, she was

soon sent elsewhere to work, to learn new things and, coming back, to teach her colleagues. She didn't waste the opportunity and soon returned with the satisfaction of one advancing in learning. Farm work is now made compatible with the work in knitwear, as it is called. Life, revealed by the glow of satisfaction, led to new colors and new styles for the garments, and the future points to larger perspectives and broader horizons. The desire to produce, the taste for working and quickly delivering an order show how

often life depends only on an opportunity to progress, to be transformed. As the Brazilian saying well expresses it, teaching someone to fish is much more productive than simply giving them fish. Of course, often we need to give them a hook and show how it works, but then you can have plenty of "fish." That's what we see with these young people who already reap the fruits of their work. For us, who have the grace to learn every day how to be a missionary in a different culture, there remains the challenge of

openness, creativity and service. Surely, we receive more than we give. We grow together with these people. Our life, our missionary zeal, our commitment to Communion and Unity reinforce and enrich every experience. The vision of Father Médaille and the generosity of the Sisters, who have gone before us for 366 years, inspire us to always seek alternatives for the promotion of life, to be creative in responding to the calls presented in the reality and in the every-day struggles of the people with whom we are sent to live.

# Sowing the Seed of Empowerment

**Sr. Sumaira Emmanuel**

*Pakistan*

On 30th March 2016 in St. Joseph's Convent in Quetta we celebrated Ursula's Skill Center with a ceremony based on "sowing the seed of empowerment." We celebrated this project for women's empowerment with the women and girls who came to learn new skills so they could be mobilized as contributing members of their families and society. The Center is named after Sister Ursula, one of the pioneers of the Pakistan foundation, who spent her life in Pakistan serving women, young and old. This project is one way in which we are engaged in the uplifting of women and helping them to become aware of their own gifts and how precious they are in God's eyes. At the center we teach the women how to stitch clothing so that with their newly learned skill they can earn money and be respected in the society, instead of thinking of themselves as unskilled members of the family. At the moment one lady from a nearby colony comes to teach the women, both young and old. The temporary professed sisters who are in Quetta are also helping them. S. Catherine was in charge of the center until recently but now, since she has been transferred, S. Abida will be taking care of and continuing the work of the center.

During the ceremony on 30th March we listened to the reading from Proverbs 31:10-31, which describes the talents and skills of the good wife, to remind these women of their value for their families. The concluding prayer included the blessing of the sewing machines by the sisters who then distributed them to the 21 students who successfully completed the program. These sewing machines, which we purchased with money from the Global Mission Fund of the congregation, will be a source of income for them and their families. In this way we are helping to reduce the poverty in which many families find themselves.

Ursula's Skill Center is part of our efforts to empower women, to create an environment where women can make decisions of their own and live with a sense of self-worth, respect and dignity. When women are empowered they are able to stand on their own and become independent, as well as to earn money for their families. Thus we, Sisters of St. Joseph, are responding to a real need in our country which still has high rates of illiteracy and unemployment. This ministry, like all that we do, is rooted in our charism, to be the presence of God's love and to create bonds of unity in the world.



*Women who completed the sewing course in Quetta*

# A Transforming Experience

Luiz Gustavo Araújo

Brazil

When we received the invitation to experience the history and the charism of the Sisters of Saint Joseph through a course in France, we experienced great excitement. We knew we had been called for something special and unique in our lives and also in the lives of the Congregation of Chambéry. It was a project developed by the Sisters of Brazil, more specifically by those based in Caxias do Sul, who chose, from among the faculty and staff, lay people involved in their works, a representative group to be sent to the site where the first communities of women were directed by Father Médaille. This group included representatives from Caxias do Sul and Pelotas.

We did group studies and reading on the history and charism of the Congregation, and had conversations with Sisters who had already had the experience of having been in Le Puy. We wanted to be able to draw as close as possible to the richness that God, through the Sisters of Saint Joseph, would be providing us. We received correspondence from the Saint Joseph International Center that communicated the affection with which we were expected and also indicated what would happen during our stay at the Center and how the course would unfold.

On October 3, a rainy and cold night, we arrived at the Saint Joseph International Center, in Le-Puy-en-Velay, to begin the course on effectiveness in mission — Charism Alive in Ministries founded by the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Early on, Sister Dolores established the tone, stating that each participant was not just an isolated part of history: “You are part of this story, and you are at the heart of this story. We need you! We need your lives,



Group of Brazilian teachers in front of the International Center in Le Puy, France

your mission, to embody the project of the Sisters of Saint Joseph together.” From that point on, during days spent in fellowship and surrounded by the affectionate care of the Sisters of the Center, we studied the history of France, met the founders of the Congregation. We also visited the old town of Le Puy and places important in the origins and foundation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. We learned of the fruitful life of Mother Saint John Fontbonne. We traveled to Lyon, where we visited sites that are relevant to the Sisters, and we reflected on the action of God in the world and the work of unity in the tradition of the religious of Saint Joseph. We learned about the presence of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in the world, and we heard about the story and the presence of the Sisters in the localities of the participants in the course, and more, so much more that would not fit on these pages.

We learned that charism is a gift given by God to be used for the good of the neighbor. So, when the Sisters of Saint Joseph are serving the other, they are serving God. They are practicing their mission to be in relationship with the neighbor and to bring unity. God is the energy that creates unity. Having made

that clear, each one of us, participants in the course, was confronted with the question, “What do I represent in this Congregation as a lay person assisting in the works of the Sisters of Saint Joseph?” So we were led to situate ourselves in our depth and to feel responsible for living that experience every minute in all locations where we are, especially in the places where we work. This awareness is a treasure that we owe to the Sisters and it is also a challenge that summons us to be better people and to awaken in the other the common good.

The Saint Joseph International Center was the place and the path for us to discover ourselves, with others and with God. There we experienced the charism of the Sisters of Saint Joseph and the difficulties, sufferings, great achievements and the joys of the history of the Congregation. We recognize the unity of the Sisters of Saint Joseph present in the diversity of the world, and we feel driven to awaken our colleagues where we work and our students who all have gifts to offer to life. Set out on the way. . . With that flame of love alive within us, we went back to Brazil and, since then, we feel called to live our witness in what we do.

# Feeding the Poor in Hartford

**Sr. Navya Neelamvilail**

*Province of Pachmarhi, India*

Armed with a 12 cup coffee-pot and a two-slice toaster, two nuns ventured out to feed the poor and hungry on the streets of Hartford, Connecticut, more than 35 years ago. Over the years that initiative has grown into a major project called 'House of Bread' reaching out to hundreds of underprivileged and poverty-stricken people. Theresa Fonti CSJ and Maureen Faenza CSJ are the pioneers of this project, that began as a soup kitchen on February 4, 1980.

The hungry, homeless and poor from the streets of Hartford began to pour in. "People just came from nowhere. They came for coffee. They came for doughnuts. They came just for companionship, to talk to us, to see us. There were alcoholics and drug addicts but they found a community of support here. They thought they belonged. We accepted everyone no matter who came to the door and fed them," said Fonti. Feeding people was one thing but housing is also important. In 1983 a day shelter was opened which gave the homeless a place to go during the day time hours. They could take a shower, do their laundry, and stay there until it was time for them to go to an overnight shelter. Going back to the streets was not the safest thing for those who were in detox.



*S. Theresa Fonti and S. Maureen Faenza serve food at the House of Bread*

House of Bread received a grant of \$ 3.5 million from the state and built three houses that take people from detox to temporary housing for three years with support services.

The soup kitchen today is no longer the same. "In 2012 we renovated our soup kitchen which cost us \$1 million, which we were very successful in raising. That increased our numbers so that 50 people at one time could come in, sit down and have a very nutritious hot meal: breakfast and lunch. Today we serve 300 people every day; breakfast and lunch. We have about 75 volunteers who assist in the soup kitchen," said Faenza.

Out of that facility, they have a job training program called FEAST: Food, Education, and Service Training. Underemployed people, who haven't worked in a long time are trained in the culinary arts so that when they complete the 10 week course

they take a state test and are employable in the food service industry. Also that facility houses Kids' Café, which prepares and delivers hot meals every day for 500 children. These children attend Boys and Girls Clubs in the city of Hartford where they enjoy a hot nutritious meal every school day evening.

A Thrift Store, a store where used items are available at a good price, is run by the volunteers of the House of Bread and is open to all those who come to the soup kitchen.

As Colin Powell said, "A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work." House of Bread has completed 36 years of its existence. Today, Sisters Theresa Fonti and Maureen Faenza, both in their 70s, are living their dream of taking care of the hungry and homeless poor of Hartford.

Sr. Mary Damien Lee (87)	USA	29.02.2016
Sr. Mary Adelaide Frank (76)	Tanmaya	02.03.2016
Sr. Madeleine Sirantoine (90)	France	11.03.2016
Sr. Bruna Nallon (93)	Brazil	13.03.2016
Sr. Maria Thereza Herbert (86)	Brazil	29.03.2016
Sr. Regina Antônia Contin (87)	Brazil	03.04.2016
Sr. Pierina Amália Tumelero (78)	Brazil	10.04.2016
Sr. Elenice Buoro (72)	Brazil	22.04.2016

**NEW**  
**SAINTS**

# Restorative Justice Offers Healing

Sr. Mary Bernard Shanley  
USA

After thirty years as chaplain in U.S. federal and state prisons in different states, Sister Maryann Cantlon, took one further step in her ministry six years ago by accepting to serve as Associate Director of Restorative Justice for the Diocese of San Jose, California. Her position requires her to be responsible for increasing services for the inmates of Santa Clara County jails and broadening the scope of the ministry to include victims and members of the community. In the performance of her duties, Sister directs and oversees communion services and Scriptures studies for inmates and support groups for victims. She herself directs Scripture studies for men each week in four County jails and, on occasion, prayer services for women. All programs are inclusive of any person choosing to participate. Recently, formation has been made available to inmates asking to receive the sacraments of baptism, eucharist and confirmation. Prior to Sister's arrival, the diocesan ministry was known as Detention Ministry and focused only on individuals who are incarcerated. The element of reconciliation is the new dimension introduced by Sister's office. Known as restorative justice, the process involves the healing and restoring of relationships between offenders, on the one hand, and victims (or relatives) and the community, on the other. The ultimate goal of the process is to bring offender and victim



S. Maryann Cantlon (3rd from left) with the bishop of San Jose and clergy who participated in the service for victims of violence

together, face to face, thus giving victims an opportunity to express their feelings and the effect of the offense on their lives, while the offenders are able to tell their life stories and the motives for their behavior.

The positive response to Sister's efforts is evident in the increase of lay volunteers from 35 to 115. With the help of her partners, new approaches have been created to meet the needs of victims. Committees have been organized to contact victims and to provide support groups and pastoral counseling. Prayer vigils and services for victims are organized on streets at the scene of a homicide and attended by groups of victims, friends and sympathizers. Two major church services are held annually for victims of violence, the most recent one held in the Cathedral Basilica of San Jose and presided over by the Bishop. The homily was given by a woman from Chicago, Illinois, whose family members were killed in a home invasion. In her narrative, the woman, unable at first to think about forgiveness, said she gradually realized that it was only through forgiveness that she could be at peace

and move on with her life. Consequently, she visited the offender and forgave him personally. As a result, he was moved to repent of his misdeed, and the two were reconciled.

As the number of years in her ministry indicate, Sister Maryann has gained valuable experience serving criminal offenders. Conscious of Father Medaille's vision of "total double union," of right relationships, and of Christ's desire that "all may be one," she has learned that every inmate she meets and serves is "the dear neighbor" of society. Whatever an individual's past may be, Sister chooses to focus on the future, on what the person can become. "Over the years, the inmates have evangelized me more than I have evangelized them," she says. "Although they have committed criminal offenses against others and society, they themselves have been victims of unspeakable violence and abuse. Everything we do in the jails and for victims has healing and reconciliation as its final goal. Whether we see tangible results or not, what matters is that we continue to minister. We can only be faithful."

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