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**English**

Italian

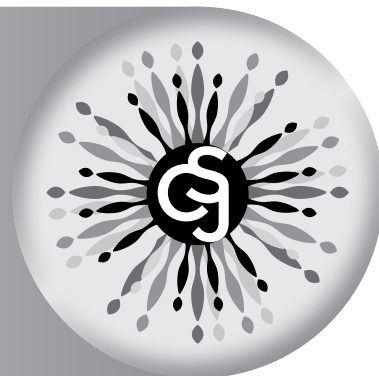
Portuguese

Norwegian

# CS JOURNAL

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry

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## GENERAL COUNCIL

# New Pathways for UISG



**S. Sally Hodgdon**  
Superior General

The Assembly of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) was held May 9-13, 2016 in Rome. This assembly, which occurs every three years, gathered over 870 superiors general from more than 80 countries, with simultaneous translation for 11 different languages. The theme of this year's assembly was Weaving Global Solidarity for Life. The keynote speakers addressed this topic in three different areas: ...for the Life of the Planet; ... for Religious Life today; ...and for Life on the Peripheries, Mission as Women Religious. Each presenter challenged all of us to weave new ways of being and working together as a global presence of life for all, but especially for those people and situations which drain or take away life. Their presentations, well worth reading, are available in different languages on the new UISG website: [www.uisg.org](http://www.uisg.org)

I very much appreciated the keynote speakers and their presentations. But the testimonies shared by the panel of young sisters and the panel of sisters from conflict-torn areas were very powerful for different reasons. Both caused me to be in touch once again with my own vocational call and first fervor. The young sisters who spoke expressed their belief that the world needs the prophetic and joyful dimension of religious life today. Sister Juliet Mousseau, RSCJ, stressed both the witness of our abiding connection in living community within a world of individualism, and that in a world that fears commitment and permanence, we witness to the possibility of commitment when we make vows to God that place us in perpetual relationship with one another. The enthusiasm and hope for the future of apostolic religious life expressed by the young sisters added vibrantly colored threads to the new tapestries of global solidarity. The Assembly celebrated the 50th Anniversary of UISG, which was established on December 8, 1965, at the

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end of Vatican Council II, with the mission of deepening its relationships with the Church, and forming communion among the Superiors General and with the Holy See, as well as with the National and International Conferences of Religious. Over these 50 years, UISG has also supported religious congregations especially in the areas of formation and education for leadership.

Today, “as an International body rooted in Christ, and representing Congregations of Women Religious throughout the world, UISG seeks to witness to and proclaim the identity of apostolic religious life in all of its diversity.” To accomplish this mission, UISG has increased staff, adding more full-time positions, including a communications person. This past year it opened two new inter-congregational

communities of sisters in Sicily to assist with the needs of the thousands of refugees, and began a project to reach out to congregations in Africa to support their needs for education and strategic planning. Talitha Kum, sponsored by UISG, is an organization working against the trafficking of persons. With its 17 networks in 70 countries on 5 continents, it continues to grow and develop new programs to engage in this critical issue of slavery and exploitation. UISG has established stronger connections with the Congregation for Religious (CICLSAL) to help facilitate and model the sharing of feminine wisdom and experience in a collaborative way.

My hope is that in these next few years UISG will become an even stronger voice for the more than 700,000 women religious throughout the world. UISG has the possibility of helping to clearly articulate both the issues impacting religious congregations, and those of the people religious women serve each day. Together we can seek solutions in solidarity with those who have the power to effect systemic change throughout the world. Thus we may bring to fulfillment the words of Sister Carmen Sammut, President of UISG, spoken at the opening of the Assembly: Let us weave dreams that awaken what is deepest and truest in us, dreams that will lead us to action, to participation, to commitment.

## PROVINCE/REGION/MISSION

# A New Era in the Danish Province

**S. Marianne Bode**

*Denmark*

**O**n May 11th this year we celebrated 160 years presence of the Sisters of Saint Joseph in Denmark.

The celebration took place in new surroundings, as we are moving from our well-known home at Strandvejen in the north of Copenhagen to the center of the city, close to our former hospital and the cemetery where more than 700 sisters are buried. During the 2014 provincial chapter, we

made the decision to sell the provincial house at Strandvejen to the municipality of Copenhagen for a home for the elderly and a skilled care facility. All the sisters agreed to this painful decision which has led us to face the future from a new perspective. After the new facility is completed, the

sisters will have a wing for those who need nursing care and there will also be apartments in the senior living unit where other sisters can live. Thus the Sisters of Saint Joseph can come back to their own building, though no longer being the owners.

The construction will take 2-3 years and meantime, the municipality has given us the possibility to have 14 sisters living in a nursing home in the center of Copenhagen. Next door to this facility there are apartments for senior living where another 10 sisters can live closely together. In this same place we will have the provincial offices as well.

Already 8 sisters have moved to their new homes: 7 sisters to the nursing home and one to the senior living. The day before the seven left, the province had a provincial assembly, which was a wonderful opportunity for us to live this day as our last day of this era and the first day of the new one. The presence of our General Superior, S. Sally, was significant on this day of transition. In the morning we took the time to remember 110 years at Strandvejen and gave thanks to our Creator God, who had accompanied the Danish Province during all these years. In the afternoon, every sister of the Danish Province was sent forth anew, to the mission each will accomplish in the future. This moment of being sent forth was very deep and touching. First, S. Sally sent forth the Provincial Superior, S. Marianne Bode. Then, the Provincial Superior named each



of the 32 sisters and sent them forth individually. Every time a sister was sent forth, there was a deep felt gratitude and excitement in the chapel. The next day, these sisters moved to their new home with a feeling of being new pioneers of the Danish Province and within the Congregation.

When the time came to celebrate our 160 year jubilee, we decided to have part of the celebration in the nursing home where 7 sisters had moved. The celebration began with a prayer service in the only church in Denmark which belongs to the municipality, built more than 100 years ago in the area created to be home to the elderly. The service was celebrated by the protestant pastor of that church and a catholic priest, Jesper Fitch, op, who is very dedicated to the Sisters, visible in the fact that in the homily he referred to the Eucharistic Letter. Among the guests

were representatives of the municipality, the construction company, the nursing home and also Susanne Malchau Dietz, a great supporter of the sisters, who wrote her Ph.D. on S. Benedicte Ramsing. In her speech she thanked the sisters for all they contributed to build up the Danish society.

It is notable that for the first time in recent Danish history, because of our request to have a small room where the sisters might pray together, a public nursing home houses a catholic chapel in their building.

Life continues in the Danish Province. We are very grateful for all the municipality is doing for us so that we can continue our life as Sisters of Saint Joseph. And we are also grateful for all the signs from throughout the Congregation, telling us that we are not alone and supporting us with prayers and good wishes.

#### **Brazil, 17/01/2016**

S. Josefa Pereira da Silva, S. Vânia Ferreiro de Mello

#### **Nagpur, 31/05/2016**

S. Ansamol George Azhchangadan, S. Fatima Rudolph Max

#### **Nirmala, 31/05/2016**

S. Delphina Kerketta, S. Sunita Toppo, S. Carmala Tigga, S. Meena Ekka, S. Roselin Xess, S. Sangita Kerketta, S. Monica Lakra

#### **Pachmarhi, 31/05/2016**

S. Phulkumari Minz, S. Sanjeeta Minz, S. Minuka Beck, S. Anima Bara, S. Supriya Dung Dung, S. Binita Markey, S. Roshna Stephen, S. Rashmi Rekha Dung Dung, S. Shalestina Nongrum, S. Priyanka KhaKha

#### **Tanmaya, 31/05/2016**

S. Anila Jyosna Nonwar, S. Maria Anthony Raj, S. Archana Anthony, S. Deepa Mary Ambrose, S. Priyanka Ignecious Horo

## **FIRST PROFESSIONS**

# What is Happening in Brazil?

**Moema Viezzer**  
*Sociologist, Brazil*

When I received an invitation from the CSJournal to write about my country at the current time, my question was, “What am I going to choose to write about in one or two pages?” because this is a very broad and complex topic. The international press has widely circulated news about confusing changes here, which brings in its wake a new glossary that shouldn’t even be a part of our normal vocabulary as citizens: corruption and money laundering, among other things.

In fact, we are facing a very special moment in this country, which for thousands of years, was inhabited by various peoples of diverse cultures and languages, all designated by the common term ‘Indians’ since the time of the conquest by Europeans in 1500. From that time, Brazil was initially ruled as a colony of the Crown of Portugal. It continued to be dependent on a dominant elite - nationally and internationally - after the proclamation of independence (1822), and the proclamation of the Republic (1889), and later experienced the stranglehold of a military dictatorship (1964 to 1980).

Brazilian democracy is still young and fragile, and many values embedded in the terminology of “domination/subordination” still prevail, although we are living in the information age with advances nurtured by globalization in its current version. In the expression of the Brazilian writer, Frei Betto, it is a system of “global-colonization.”

In this context, even as a part of emerging countries and integrating regional blocs, Brazil still has a lot to learn in order

to get rid of old paradigms of official democracy and achieve the status of a real democracy.

I chose to emphasize here especially what is said and passed on about widespread ‘corruption’ and the treatment of it by the legally constituted executive, legislative and judicial branches. In general, there is much talk of the necessary strengthening and independence of these institutions which interfere too much in the life of the country. And here comes the basic question: What makes up these institutions except the citizens who are part of them? Limiting the proposals to removing a president and putting another in any one of these institutions, as well as including specific modifications to them, does not change the essence of the issues on the agenda.

As an educator, I believe an indispensable socio-environmental task is short, medium, and long term formation for the “culture of the common good,” in society in general and in the institutions that represent and serve it through different areas of expertise. It is our duty to transcend purely political party options to refocus, respecting the real needs of a large and youthful country, with a population of more than 200,000,000 people with great regional impact.

Understanding and practicing the “ethics of care” is a sine qua non in order to affirm that women and men of all ages, races, ethnicities, religions, and social situations are taken seriously. Brazil needs to walk in the direction that the future of humanity is seeking. As is clearly stated in the Earth Charter, we need an economy ‘serving’ society and the environment, and not an economy ‘dominating’ social relations and the environment. Only then will we be living as we should be in “Our



MOEMA VIEZZER, Brazilian, is a sociologist and educator. For several years, she belonged to the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Today, she is an activist and also as a consultant on initiatives for “Formation on the Ethics of Care,” especially in matters relating to ‘Gender Equality’ and ‘Environmental Justice’.

Common Home”, using the expression of Pope Francis. In other words, what we, human beings and citizens, urgently need is to relearn how to live on this small planet that has become a global village and how to live with it.

This conversation is already circulating widely in academia, religious institutions, social movements, alternative communities and social networks. It is a conversation that deserves to be taken seriously in the short, medium and long term, if we are to reach the maturity of our young democracy. And in this collective enterprise, solidarity and support from citizens from all over the world is crucial.

Brazil is a Federal Republic in which the constitutional head of state is also the head of government elected by the people for four years. Dilma Rousseff was the first woman to govern the country (2011/2014) and was re-elected for the term 2015/2018. However, in May of

this year, she was removed from office for 180 days, accused of disregarding budgetary and administrative issues and being involved in acts of corruption. During that period, Dilma Rousseff will be judged to determine if she continues or not to govern Brazil. The Vice President,

Michel Temer, is administering the country currently. In addition, an ongoing operation called ‘Carwash’ is underway— the largest investigation of corruption and money laundering that Brazil has ever had and which began in March, 2014.

# Gypsy School Experience

**Flonia Hafeez**

*Pakistan – 2nd Year Postulant*

I have had the opportunity to be part of the Sisters of Saint Joseph ministry with the Gypsy Community at China Scheme Gujjar Pura in Lahore, Pakistan. We work with these people who are marginalized and put down by the Government. My experience with the Gypsy community has been very cordial. They are a very simple and down-to-earth people. I was very glad while teaching their children. I became aware of how skillful and talented they are when I was teaching them art and designing at the sewing centre where many of their young girls are being trained by the Sisters of St. Joseph. It touched me deeply when some of the children expressed their desire to become doctors, teachers, pilots, etc. They demonstrated great hope and a desire to glorify God as their life situation improves. I am very proud to be a part of the CSJ community which is a source of light to these marginalized people in this fractured world. The Sisters of St Joseph

are helping them become able to earn their daily bread and to take care of their own needs.

This was an opportunity for me to feel the love of God and to be strengthened in my faith that God shows merciful love to

the people by our service. Working with the Gypsy Community in Lahore gave me greater insight into how the sisters are living Jesus' mission among the rejected ones of society, serving the poorest in different ways throughout the world.



## A Grain of Sand in Spiritual and Human Growth

**S. Francisca Dias de Medeiros**

*Bolivia*

In San Ramón, Department of Beni, Bolivia, Sister Jacinta Maria Iob, Brazilian missionary of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry, started a Biblical Reflection Group and, over the years, other Sisters continued, giving her support. It now consists of a group of women who gather to meditate upon and study the Bible. I am currently accompanying a group of 25 women who are eager to meet the

word of God and who are willing to grow, personally and spiritually, as a Christian community. As Sisters of Saint Joseph, we want to exercise our charism of unity by being a friend, a supportive presence and by listening. I have opened the doors of our community for moments of reflection, prayer and sharing of life. Also, I prepare workshops, retreats and days of sharing. This is an opportunity to be part of the lives of these people who, little by little, engage with the community, carrying forward pastoral and social work and other services to the needy.

The following are two testimonies by Biblical Reflection Group members:

### **How to Know and Do the Will of God?** Taña Leigue (Laywoman)

A few years ago, Sister Jacinta invited several women to a meeting at the Rectory in San Ramón, Beni, Bolivia. Once assembled, we felt the need to study and know Scripture. We meet once a week for prayerful reading of the Word. Thus we learn, share our experiences and, little by little, discover and know what the will of God is in our lives. As this group was growing, the plan of God was manifesting itself, and we started to realize what our mission was in the community. Why didn't we discern this before?

The Sisters, part of the community of

San Ramón, accompanied us on our mission and, currently, Sister Francisca is with us. The weekly meetings help us to strengthen our faith and trust in God through the Holy Spirit and, thus, we have a dynamic and creative ministry. We visit the sick, bringing to them the message of the Word of God. We evangelize the communities, praying the Rosary with families during the month of May and the Novena to the Infant Jesus in preparation for Christmas. We are engaged in campaigns of solidarity to help people in need and, to strengthen our spiritual life, we participate in retreats in which we look at our lives and return to our homes, renewed physically and spiritually.

Now that we know and communicate intimately with God, we know that he loves us unconditionally and that the best is yet to come. We are learning to love more intensely, to pray, to trust and to be faithful to his calls.

### Participating in a Spiritual Retreat

Flor Cuellar Ojopi (Laywoman)

I feel very blessed to be a part of this group, in which I learned to grow closer to Jesus and his Word. In addition, I am learning to be better as a person, as a woman, wife, mother, daughter, sister and friend. In order to grow closer to one another and to God and to share our joys and pains, we were invited by Sister Francisca to make a spiritual retreat. On May 14, at 6:30 in the morning, we went by motorcycle (the most common mode of transport in San Ramon) to the farm of Mary, a friend and participant in the group. The retreat was guided by Sisters Ericka and Francisca.



Sister Francisca (left) and retreat participants

Sister Ericka did some relaxation exercises with us in preparation for prayer. For me, it was great, because I am a woman who likes physical activity. Sister Ericka's instruction was extraordinary and rejuvenating, renewing the health of all participating in the group.

Then we began another activity with Sister Francisca, reading the passage of Genesis which describes creation and all that God has done. It was a time of thanksgiving, to recognize all the beauty and perfection that God has created for us. After reading and meditation, there was a time of sharing, and each could express her experience of prayer with the text. It was very interesting and intense because we were able to express ourselves and appreciate the wonders of nature that God has given us, life in its different colors, the variety of shapes, flavors and also the remedies existing therein. It was

impressive!

Sharing all this, we realized that we do not always value and respect what our God has created. So, we were led to ask for forgiveness and mercy for all of us. Based on this theme, we shared our family difficulties and, above all, how much it costs us to forgive. Moreover, we realize that we must not have a grudge against anybody in this life. Then we prayed with the text of the prophet Ezekiel, where God promises to change hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. This time was a moment of great trust, hope and commitment to change in our lives. At the end, we embraced one another in forgiveness and acceptance of each as she is, and, above all, with the desire to grow in the spiritual life and in the life of the community. The retreat was something wonderful and all feel renewed, both physically and spiritually.

## NEW SAINTS

S. Thomas Mary Manjooran (85)	Tanmaya	29/04/2016
S. Aurora Libera Tormen (80)	Brazil	17/05/2016
S. Mary Philippa Finnimore (83)	Tanmaya	21/05/2016
S. Maria Felicitas Haas (95)	Denmark	11/06/2016
S. Maria Odete Marini (95)	Brazil	15/06/2016
S. Thérèse Marie Bernadet-Jacquier (93)	France	21/06/2016
S. Denise Charvoz (83)	France	26/06/2016
S. Marie Marcel Deplus (80)	France	27/06/2016
S. Carmem Piazero (94)	Brazil	29/06/2016
S. Gracioza Burim (92)	Brazil	03/07/2016

# Challenged to Repair a Fractured World

S. Gracy Paul

South Sudan

Inspired by the 2004 Rome Congress on Consecrated Life, Solidarity with South Sudan is a project that seeks to promote the Kingdom of God in partnership with the local church and the people of Sudan through the establishment and development of teacher and health training institutes and those pastoral services deemed most urgent. After decades of civil war, it was clear that projects related to education, health and pastoral care are needed if lasting peace will be achieved. [taken from the Mission Statement]

When Solidarity with South Sudan asked for volunteers, something stirred within me. I just had to be part of that broken world, working with other volunteers to help heal the fractures of wounded, conflict-torn South Sudan.

When I first arrived, I had the opportunity, at Juba, to attend a Trauma Healing Training, which is extremely helpful when interacting with students. There is much trauma to be healed. Almost every indigenous person can speak of a lost family member. Many say it was better before independence because they had their land, cattle, home, family. But with the war everything was lost.

After a few days in Juba, I spent two months at Wau Catholic Health Training Institute, teaching English to nursing students. Even though this was challenging, it gave me great pleasure to interact with them as South Sudanese are gracious, polite and speak English pretty

well. They dress neatly, their shoes always well polished but one hardly sees them laughing or smiling.

In our residential Colleges where we train teachers, nurses and midwives, we have record numbers – 108 for nursing, midwifery training in Wau and 119 for teacher training in Yambio. In both Colleges, students come from a diverse mix of tribes across the country. In our Colleges, we are successful in creating unity in diversity, forgiveness, a future platform for peace. The students, from many regions of South Sudan, plus the Nuba Mountains (ethnically Southern but officially part of the north) enjoy being together and help one another in their common goal to become professionals in their chosen careers. This is a very positive aspect which we nurture and encourage.

The economic situation of the country is very precarious. The Government created 28 States where formerly there were 10, without taking into consideration what would be the cost to support and sustain them. The attitude, seemingly born out of the extraordinary generosity of other nations, seems to be, 'Oh well, someone will give us funding.' But the truth is, many generous countries and donors are increasingly wary of giving directly to a Government when there is such chaotic decision-making.

Poverty has increased with the devaluation of their currency. Even those holding jobs find it difficult to survive. Many are hungry. Some are reduced to having just one meal a day. When some biscuits were offered to a young man who had not eaten for two days, he declined as he said eating them would only awaken his hunger. He did however, accept water. Now, at Yambio Teachers' Training College, I teach English to Teacher Trainers. Yambio is a beautiful place - cool, green all around, with an abundance of mangoes. There are 120 students from the 20 to 35 age group who study in the college and reside in the hostel. College



Sister Gracy Paul, an Indian Sister born in Nagpur, was a teacher for some years and worked with street children in Bombay and also with illiterate children. On January 4, 2016, fearlessly, and putting aside material comforts, she went to South Sudan, where she continues to serve the neediest. Sister Gracy shares a little of her experience in this new social context.

classes are from 8.15 to 4.30 pm with a break for lunch. From 7.30 to 9.30 pm we take our turns for library service. We are eight members in community - six sisters and two brothers - who share the cleaning of the house, washing of dishes, cooking, teaching, preparing prayer. I enjoy my teaching and work. I feel so young and energetic just seeing 70- and 75-year old Brothers and Sisters here on Mission, working so hard. It is remarkable to see each one with a focus on mission, a powerful witness of loving, dedicated service to God's people. I am privileged to learn so much from each one as I witness to our charism of communion in South Sudan. Please pray for PEACE in South Sudan.

# Leaders as Leaven

S. Navya Neelamvilail

Pachmarhi Province

Seventy Sisters of St. Joseph from different parts of the USA gathered together in Latham, New York, from April 14 to 18, 2016. This was the closing gathering for a year-long leadership training program called 'Leaders as Leaven.'

Awareness that the collective effectiveness as Sisters of St. Joseph, organizationally and globally, depends on their ability to develop leaders provided the initiative to begin the Leaders as Leaven program, which now has trained more than 100 leaders in three years.

The training program lasts for more than a year. Using the Leadership Circle Profile™ Manager Edition to gain insight into how they lead and interact with others, the participants take an online survey about themselves, which was also completed by 20 people who have known them in different working and living environments.

"The Leadership Circle Profile is really the cornerstone of the program," said Barbara Bozak, csj, the director of the program. "The participants who take this, get feedback not only from one group of people but from a number of people: the people with whom they work and minister, the people with whom they live, and from other significant groups. And so it helps every individual to see herself through the eyes of people who interact with her in different ways."

This profile measures two leadership



*A participant lights a candle in preparation for prayer.*

domains — Creative Competencies and Reactive Tendencies. This information offers insights and opportunities for personal development.

Creative competencies measure how one achieves results, brings out the best in others, leads with vision, enhances his or her own development, acts with integrity and courage, and improves organizational systems. Reactive tendencies indicate a leadership style which emphasizes caution over creating results, self-protection over productive engagement, and aggression over building alignment. These self-limiting styles focus on gaining the approval of others, protecting oneself, and getting results through high control tactics. Each participant has a mentor, a guide who follows her through the year and helps her to discover and own her creative side and her reactive side. The participants are also part of a table group with whom they share their journey every month through the year.

Dolores Clerico, SSJ, one of the mentors, noted "It has been a program that has

helped people to be more reflective about how it is they relate to others. And it has helped people to recognize how they can influence people and situations for good in simple and ordinary ways. They see leadership as something that can be lived out each and every day wherever they are. It doesn't have to be something like a grand job that they have. It really is the idea of being leaven, of being that presence in situations to help others to flourish."

I had the opportunity to attend this program. My understanding of leadership has changed. Leadership is not confined only to leadership roles. The roles come and go. I am called to be a leader all the time. I need to change my way of operating; I need to change from my tendency to want to do something all the time to being in myself and others. The Leadership Circle Profile made it very easy for me to understand the way I tend to function either creatively or reactively. It gave me greater self awareness and confidence.

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