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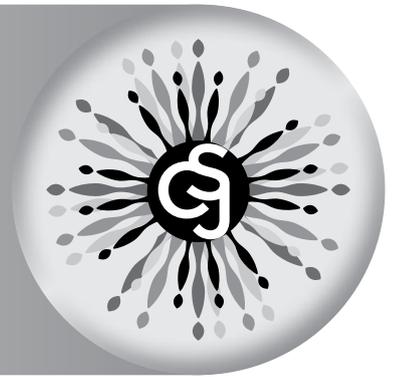
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CS JOURNAL

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry
July - September • Year 2016 - n. 4



GENERAL COUNCIL

Going on Mission to Overcome the Crisis

S. Mariaelena Aceti

General Council

“We would have overcome many internal crises in our institutions, if we had gone on mission. We did, but not enough”. This is what Cardinal Braz de Aviz, Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, says that he wrote to the Pope upon returning from Mozambique, one of the many journeys that led him to learn more about consecrated men and women around the world.

And how can we not agree with him? How can we not recognize that we need to put into effect, “a missionary option capable of transforming everything”: customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures, “so they become channels for the evangelization of today’s world.” (*The Joy of the Gospel* 27) The impression is that we breathe a stifling air where conflicts in relationships risk, at times, to become overwhelming, thus undermining the mission which demands high priority for service to the least among us. The management of everyday life and the administration of our assets become the only reason for living, and sometimes it is only on the pages of our chapter



Cardinal Braz de Aviz

documents that we give space to the poor and those on the peripheries. In this context, those who want “more,” a while after having made their profession, begin to reclaim their lives and gradually to create personal spaces, abandoning the generous self-giving that had moved them earlier on. The congregation thus loses, here and there around the world, valid members, women rich with gifts, and accepts that this happens, justifying it through the frailties of contemporary culture. Those who enter the congregation find a comfortable, but not challenging, environment, soon getting

SUMMARY

GENERAL COUNCIL

Going on Mission to Overcome the Crisis

COVER

PROVINCE/REGION/MISSION

New Saints

2

USA: The Global JPIC Meeting – 2016

3

Brazil: The Value and Dignity of Women

4

South Sudan: A Note from South Sudan

5

Bolivia: A Work of Mercy

6

Nagpur: Empowered to Empower

6

Norway: A Sign of Hope, Joy and Life for the Norwegian and Italian Provinces

8

Brazil: One Province Organized into Six Core Groups

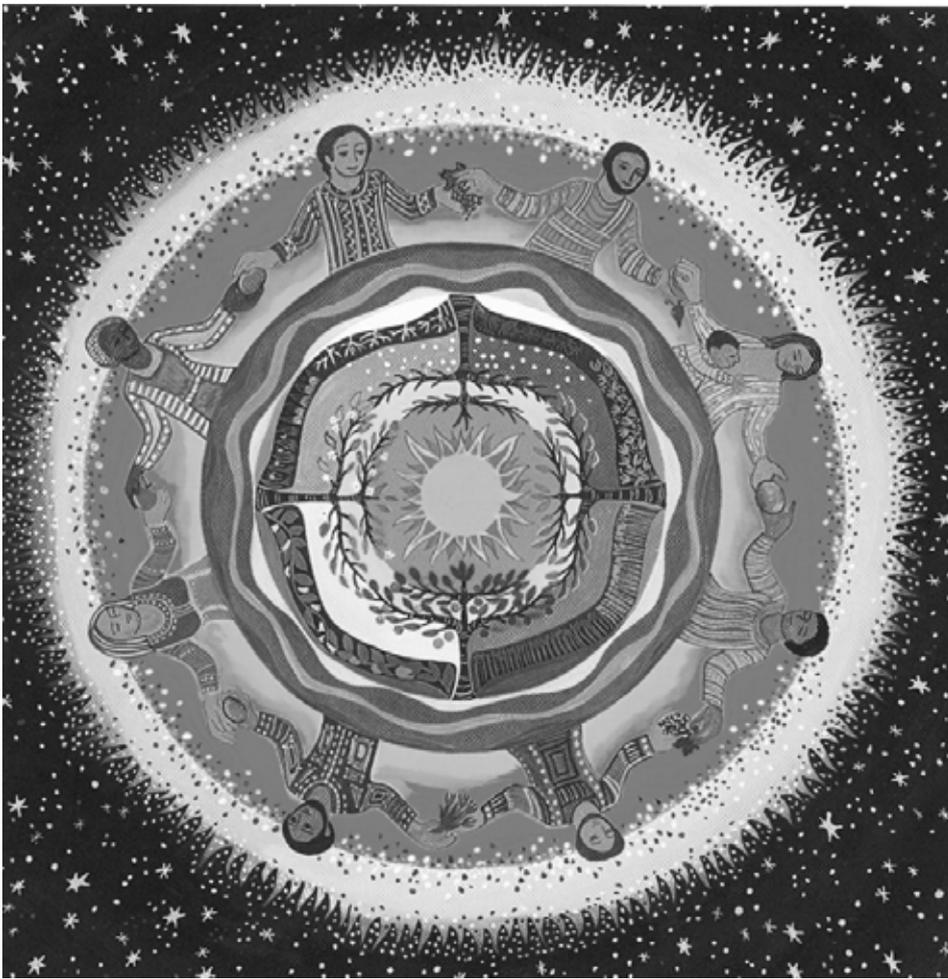
9

Tanzania: Challenged to Grow and Change

10

Brazil: And the Lace is Not Yet Finished...

11



used to it, but just as soon paying the price: how many young Juniors, even among us, leave because, after a few years, they already no longer see the meaning of the life they had chosen? But isn't it time to decisively undertake that "missionary conversion" the Pope speaks of so much, to leave behind things as they are? "Mere administration" can no longer be

enough. Throughout the world we need to be "permanently in a state of mission." (*The Joy of the Gospel* 25) And what is this state, if it is not the recovery of our original identity? Like so much of the Church, are we running the risk of turning to more secure environments, to more protected and known contexts, to intra-ecclesial activity? I wonder what strength of

identity the guidance of Father Médaille has today for the Sisters of Saint Joseph: go where there is no one ... leave when others take over ... as weak instruments, help to re-establish unity... a body without a body, a congregation without a congregation... How important are our availability and our apostolic options? How to make a difference when it's time to choose whether to go or stay, to open or close, to hold on or let go? For years, at least my over twenty-five years in the Congregation, we, Sisters of Saint Joseph, while expressing a genuine desire of renewal, did, however, wait until the wind turned and blew in our favor. Something a bit like this is happening today in the world with the economic crisis. We wished this crisis to be a passing one, and the time would return when we would feel strong and then choose to go out on mission. But isn't it precisely the going on mission that can heal our weakness? Isn't it the passion for our dear neighbor that can make us still vibrate with life, even in our weakness, that can break new ground and save our action and sometimes even our structures? I wish we could, as did our first sisters, combine realism and the ability to dream, concreteness and audacity, local involvement and total availability, certain that the Lord never abandons those who leave everything, but really everything, for Him.

PROVINCE/REGION/MISSION

NEW SAINTS

S. Nora Doyle (89)	Ireland	16/07/2016
S. Dominika Wiening (79)	Denmark	19/07/2016
S. Jean Marie McAuliffe (85)	USA	27/07/2016
S. Dorothée Covarel (89)	France	10/08/2016
S. Iva Boschetti (102)	Brazil	11/08/2016
S. Sofia Togni (94)	Italy	17/08/2016
S. Marie Antoinette Chalansonnet (90)	France	26/08/2016
S. Marie Agnès Vignoud (91)	France	29/08/2016
S. Lourdes Teresinha Pastore (81)	Brazil	06/09/2016
S. Therezinha Alessi (80)	Brazil	16/09/2016

The Global JPIC Meeting — 2016

S. Linda Pepe

USA

The Global Justice and Peace Group (JPIC) met in St Johns, Florida, USA from July 13th to the 18th, immediately following the U.S. Federation Event. Members of this group, which represents Sisters of St. Joseph from all over the world, include the three International Congregations — Lyon, Annecy and Chambéry; four Federations — the U.S., Canadian, Italian and French; and the independent Congregations in Argentina, Haiti, Australia. At the July meeting, our Congregation was represented by S. Nilva Rosin (Brazil) and S. Linda Pepe (USA), members of the previous JPIC Commission. Also present were S. Lorraine Marie Delaney (India) as facilitator and S. Barbara Bozak (USA), part of the UN-NGO presence. The purpose of the Global JPIC group, which first met almost ten years ago, was to develop and foster communications

world-wide with all Sisters of St. Joseph, so that we would have a universal voice at the United Nations through our UN-NGO. The 2016 meeting was conducted in five languages — English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian. It combined discussion and large group sharing with times for quiet contemplation. Eight participants were asked to be part of two panel discussions. The first, centered on Pope Francis' Encyclical, *Laudato Si*, was presented by sisters from Argentina, Algeria, Italy, and Canada. The second, on the Sustainable Development Goals passed by United Nations in September 2015, included sisters from Brazil, India, Haiti and the United States. Each presenter was asked to focus on how our Charism fits with these two documents. Each one, reflecting on the topic from the perspective of her culture and lived reality, gave a thorough and thought provoking presentation which generated much discussion and helped us to achieve the goal of agreeing upon a single, yet broad, focus for the next two years. We had all read about and studied

Laudato Si, thanks to the many articles, workshops, web presentations and videos on line offered by theologians, moralists, ecologists, etc., but the SDGs were not as well known or widely circulated. While we are all familiar with the encyclical and how our Charism of right relationship fits into the Pope's admonitions to care for our society as well as our earth, the same is not true for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which mirror the concerns expressed by Pope Francis. The 17 SDGs, each having several targets, were adopted by the United Nations with a target date of 2030. They continue and expand the Millennium Development Goals that ended in 2015, without all goals having been accomplished. At our meeting we became more aware of our responsibility to hold the bureaucrats accountable for what was pledged by their governments, so the SDGs might reach their targeted goals. This is done in two ways. First, we must educate ourselves, our members and co-workers regarding the Sustainable Development Goals and what our national leaders have pledged.



All those present at the Global JPIC meeting in July

Second, we, the citizens, must keep pressure on our elected officials to fulfill their pledge

After much discussion, and quiet contemplation, the group arrived at a common focus for the next two years: "Women." This is both broad enough to incorporate all realities and ministries of the Sisters of St. Joseph, and can be approached equally from the Encyclical

and the SDGs. Over the next two years, all will be asked to focus on some aspect of this topic. Yet another objective of the meeting was to set up a structure whereby we could communicate and share information with one another, and with our UN-NGOs two of whom (Justine Senapati and Marianne Sennick) stressed the importance of information gathered from all Sisters of St. Joseph to

be incorporated into their reports and presentations. Six sisters volunteered to be members of a core committee that would function as disseminators and gatherers of information from and to our representatives at the United Nations. Going forward, there will be more communication with the members of our Congregation as the task gains clarity and direction.

The Value and Dignity of Women

S. Zelia Camatti
Brazil

The population of Miguel Calmon in northeastern Brazil is poor due to several factors, including drought and the authorities' lack of interest in several areas, especially education, health and public assistance. A high rate of unemployment, illiteracy, lack of professional qualification, prostitution and involvement with all types of drugs exist in the area.

Analyzing the current situation in the outskirts of our town, we, the Sisters of Good Shepherd Community, felt the need to intervene and to help the population, especially women, through practical educational courses. These courses, offered by the Caritas parish group, promoted a project to be financed by the Global Mission Fund of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

We see young women engaged solely in domestic life, taking care of the house and children. These same women need an income to help their companions cover the costs of things such as education, health care, clothing and food. However, due to the lack of training, they end up being excluded from the labor market.



It is worth mentioning that the city is poor in technical courses that are offered through government initiative. This leaves thousands of needy young people adrift, since, due to the cost, they are not being able to enroll in a private technical school. Although these families have access to various government programs, such as the monthly "Family Allowance," which may help in an emergency situation, it doesn't provide human dignity to the women in need. Thus these families are left, as the popular adage says, with "having been given fish, but not the means to fish." Another factor is the high number of drug users in this area, who, in search of easy money, become involved with the illegal trade, bringing consequences on themselves, their families and society. Our project started in March, 2016. Weekly, for 2 hours in the afternoon, around 40 participants attend

courses, each with women volunteers (seamstresses and embroiderers) from the Caritas group in the parish. All, participants and volunteers alike, are happy to be part of this program. Every day we find new ways to continue this project, gathering resources to acquire the materials needed for the courses. Caritas in the Diocese of Ruy Barbosa, a neighbor municipality, also has gotten involved and gives material support to the project. The items made will be exhibited in a bazaar twice a year in our parish. It is the place where, for the time being, the work will be displayed and sold. The volunteers who teach the courses are continuing in 2017 with other participants. At the same time, those who are attending wish to have other courses such as candle making and the fabric- painting, with the input of knowledgeable persons from the Caritas parish group.

A Note from South Sudan

In our last Issue we published an article by S. Gracy Paul who is in South Sudan. She recently sent this update to her provincial and the General Council. Here we share her experience with you.

S. Gracy Paul

South Sudan

Here the ministry & life are very challenging and very risky; anytime any place, we can be attacked. In July we had the assembly of all the Solidarity members in Juba, the capital of S. Sudan. After the 3-day assembly we left on the morning flight for Yambio, where I'm now working. And the war, in Juba, began on the evening of the day we left. Thousands of people were killed.

It is unpredictable, what will happen. We just trust in God and continue doing our part. College is going on well. In July, with the help of the students, I completed a book on African Proverbs. Now I'm working at African Rhymes. I appreciate receiving good thoughts, stories, or prayer services because we conduct morning assembly for the students.

Here there is no social life. I keep myself busy with stitching the torn clothes of students (because they all have second hand clothing), counselling them, trauma healing, listening to their life stories. Their life events are very challenging and scary, things we have never heard of.

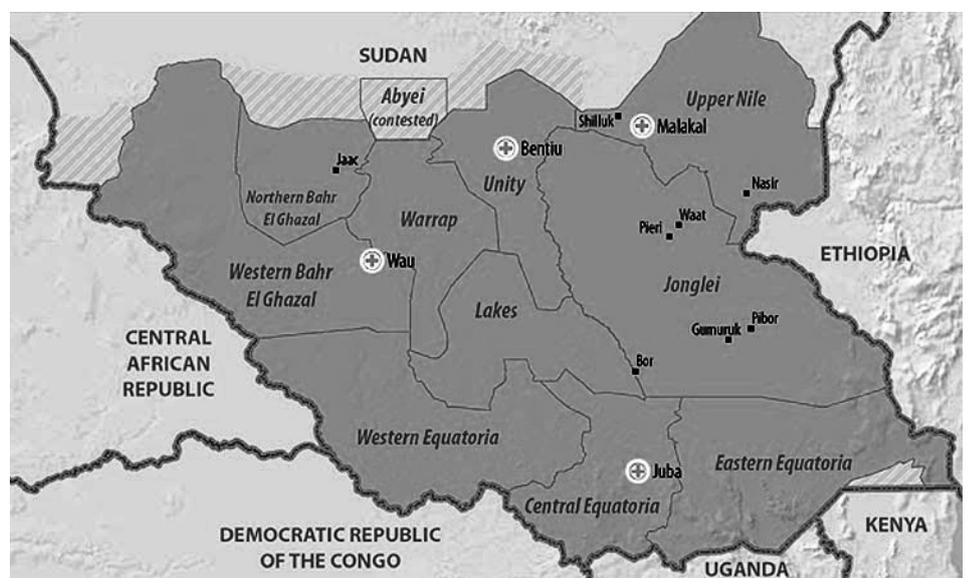
In a July letter to Church personnel, the Archbishop of Juba wrote: "If any missionary wants to leave the place, they may do so." But we choose to

stay. In difficult times, we have more to offer, perhaps, than in stable times. The people know we can leave but are encouraged when we choose to stay with them. 'Could you not watch one hour with me?' takes on a new meaning. We are called to live our Christian faith. As Archbishop Paolino wrote: 'Be strong and of good courage because the Lord our God is with us in this difficult time.' A major factor in the instability is the violence imposed on the people by security personnel, soldiers and police. They seem to think their uniforms and guns give them the right to take whatever they want and do whatever they wish, without any fear of consequences. When soldiers are unpaid because the Government has no money to pay them, they turn to looting, raping and grabbing whatever they can from the vulnerable. This is the consequence of a broken economy. Those who are supposed to protect society become the perpetrators of violence. It is the law of the jungle: survival of the fittest! Here, when violence breaks out, the people flee to 'the bush' and many die there. So many of our students have lost family members. They just cry and endure it because they cannot go for their funerals. We help them to forgive and to be in peace.



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.

Now the situation is peaceful. We have regular classes in our college. I feel happy and privileged to be here to support them, and recognize how the prayers of many sustain us.



A Work of Mercy

S. Antonia Constantina Mandro

Bolivia

When we arrived in Santa Cruz in 2013, we didn't know where to begin our mission. We had a room on the first floor of a house which was suitable for social work. The Neighborhood Association of the district proposed that we open a day care center to respond to a neighborhood need. At first we said no, because it seemed better to us to continue the school support as had the previous owners of the house, the Carmelite Missionary Sisters. However, our neighbors insisted on their proposal in the following years. In 2015, during a visit of Sister Ieda Tomazini, General Councilor, we had a conversation which led us to consider the idea, leading to the decision to accept the challenge.

We live in a neighborhood on the outskirts of the city of Santa Cruz. The majority of the population is made up of migrants from other states who come in search of work and better living conditions. Most live by renting one room for the entire family. The most common work is trade in used clothing, fruits, vegetables and food. The kindergarten was a response to the needs of families and single mothers who must work to survive. Many had to bring their children to work with them, exposing them to many dangers on the street, or leave them locked in their rooms. Since 2015,

we have welcomed approximately 40 children, ages six months to five years, with three teachers and a cook to serve them. Over time, we want to increase our capacity to care for 60 children. My work is coordinating the nursery, buying food, meeting with parents, enrolling children, and being responsible for the daycare through an agreement with the Municipality of Santa Cruz. The parents pay a monthly fee according to their ability, which contributes to the cost of some food and maintenance. The Government assumes the wages of the teachers and gives food stuffs. The experience of these two years has been a response to the need of the families, whose resources are

scarce, accompanying children so that they can have full development at the age when they should receive good nutrition, education and values. Parents also receive guidance through various activities that are held during the year. Thus, as the Region of Bolivia, we are using the space in the house while we are also helping to sustain the community. We are three Sisters in the community, but only one works directly in the nursery. The others are engaged in different pastoral services, according to their possibilities and conditions. Through mutual support and sharing of our gifts, we are a significant presence, and we are evangelizing the neighborhood and the parish.



Empowered to Empower

S. Olinda Fernandes

Nagpur Province, India

Called to launch out into the deep, to enlarge one's tent and to live the dynamism of reconciliation

and unity in the peripheries of our fractured world, I continued my journey of reaching out to the last, the lost and the least.

For years I have been visiting and reaching out to widows and shut-ins

but always wanted to do something more... and so, with one companion or another, I began visiting slum areas in and around Chembur. In my five years of interaction with them I got to know their situation, their problems, their

misery; The women folk here suffer the most, with either a drunken or unfaithful husband, a prodigal son, bickering in-laws, quarrelsome neighbours etc. . . each fighting for his/her own survival. Women have to make ends meet, fend for their children, work harder to manage one square meal a day, and if it's a question of educating their children it meant extra hard work and saving. Living in a male-dominated society, women have no say even though it is they who help the family to survive. The safety of girls is at high risk and so girls are engaged, and married off at a tender age. Not encouraged to study, many drop out of school at a very young age. Yet the women and girls are highly talented and if given an opportunity, would excel academically. They are hardworking and sacrificing. Water-filling and cooking are the two main duties of these women, after which they keep themselves busy with petty, unhygienic and very low-paid jobs like cleaning and cutting leather for shoes. They are then made to work in petty factories or as domestic maids. In either case, they are poorly paid. Believing that the most effective tool for development is empowerment, I realised I could personally give them some income-generating skills that did not demand any specific time and space, thus equipping them for a better and brighter future.

Sewing has always been my passion and I have a Diploma in Sewing and Tailoring. Over the years I have shared this talent, training many groups and individuals. This year the General Chapter theme encouraged me to reach out to those on the peripheries of our fractured world. With the support and encouragement of Sr. Lorraine Marie, in January of this year, I intensified my visits to the slums. I invited a few interested women from the four neighbouring slums to attend my sessions. Although their level of perseverance was very low, I was determined to try as I had nothing to lose.

I began planning and found like-minded people to sponsor the project.



S. Olinda (R) teaching a woman how to use the sewing machine

I would use a room in our former social centre; seating the women on the floor where they would be more comfortable, collected old sheets and curtains, sewed sample garments, bags, purses etc.. I hung them up in the room which was decorated with posters on the empowerment of women and Biblical quotes.

The women gradually took turns to lead and close the training sessions with a prayer, which both built up their own lives of faith and gave them much needed confidence to speak in public.

To everyone's surprise, the women were able to stitch 8 garments and 8 varieties of bags, all in just 15 working days!! I got in touch with some small scale industries which provided cut pieces of material, ready to be stitched. The more they stitched, the more they earned. We also discussed family and health related problems and sought solutions together. In the process of empowering these women, they were guided to empower others. Their "gurudakshani" (fees) would be to train other women in their locality and return in the month of July with their trainee for an advanced course



S. Olinda (R) with some women

planned for them.

We had an exhibition of all the women had produced in this short while. The women, themselves, organised the concluding day's programme. A short prayer service, sharing of opinions, and even the vote of thanks was done beautifully by them. In their sharing, the women mentioned how they were empowered to learn and in turn demonstrate before the class their own understanding. My joy will be complete when I see them independently earning their livelihood and living with dignity.

A Sign of Hope, Joy and Life for the Norwegian and Italian Provinces

S. Marie-Kristin Riosianu and
S. Anette Moltubakk
Norway

It was a spontaneous invitation to the temporary professed of Italy to come to Norway, that gave the young people an opportunity to meet. Sr. Marianne Tran Thi Quyen, from Vietnam, made her first profession on August 13, 2016, a great day in the Norwegian province made yet more joyful through the presence of some new members of the Italian province. Sr. Marianne's mother and sister from Vietnam were there to celebrate together with the Norwegian sisters. The Italian province was represented by three sisters: S. Cristina Gavazzi, the provincial of Italy, together with two sisters in first vows, S. Veronica Poopana and S. Vanessa Perna. S. Mariaelena Aceti, a member of the General Council, also came for the celebration.

In 2008 the Norwegian Province received the first two Vietnamese young women who wanted to find out if they had a vocation to be Sisters of St. Joseph. Today there are ten young Vietnamese women with us, among them six temporary professed, two postulants who began their novitiate on September 4th and two candidates who have just begun their journey in religious life. The program these young women follow in the Norwegian province begins with inviting the new candidate to stay one year in Norway to experience the province of elderly sisters, the Norwegian climate, culture, language and food. Then she may travel home for a month, and discerns whether she feels a vocation to Norway or not. This year gives the Norwegian Province an opportunity to know the candidate and to discern her vocation as



S. Marianne with the Italian visitors (L to R) Sisters Vanessa, Mariaelena, Cristina and Veronica



Young Vietnamese women in the Norwegian province (6 juniors, 2 novices, 2 candidates) and Sr. Marianne's sister

well. During their first years in Norway, these young Vietnamese sisters study the Norwegian language at home or at a

language school. Even though many of them have university studies they have to have a very good knowledge of the Norwegian language to do further studies.

One has received a bachelor degree in theology, and is now studying to become a social worker, a course that takes three years. Two are trained to work with children and youth; both currently teach in a kindergarten. One is being trained as a health care worker, an education which involves both theory and practice. One is a qualified nurse from Vietnam and, having been approved as a Health Care worker in Norway, is now working in a nursing home. Sr. Marianne, who is studying music, has completed the first

year of a five year program. All of them receive a solid formation in spirituality and theology as well as our charism and history. Since this is a Lutheran country, in the area of theology we work together with the Lutheran Faculty. Even if the province has only 28 sisters and most of the sisters are elderly, with three over 90, the Norwegian Province is still active. We strive to be and to build bridges between the Catholic Church and other denominations and in society. This celebration of first vows was yet another

occasion to create new bridges between provinces. There was a joyful and familiar atmosphere among the young sisters of the two provinces as they got to know each other a little more. In spite of different languages, cultures and nationalities they experienced each other in a very life giving and enthusiastic way. This encouraged all of us to continue collaboration in Initial Formation, putting into action one of the calls of the General Chapter.

One Province Organized into Six Core Groups

S. Luiza Rodrigues, S. Elisa Fátima Zuanazzi, S. Geni Estegues Pereira, S. Katia Rejane Sassi and S. Neuz Maria Delazari

Provincial Council, Brazil

Since the Provincial Chapter, January 25-30, 2016, the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry form One Province in Brazil. To ensure greater participation of all in this integration process, we decided to organize into six clusters of communities, by geographical proximity. For each cluster, an assembly was held with two objectives: greater knowledge and integration of the Sisters and organization. In each assembly, a meaningful name was chosen for every group of communities, thus: Saint Joseph, Holy Family, the New Way, Good Shepherd, S. Cecilia Inês Muraro and Holy Trinity. In each core, we chose a sister as animator, whose mission it is to monitor and stimulate the life of the communities, in close communion with the Provincial Council. This sister is part of the Extended Council (Provincial Council, Coordinators of the clusters and/or Coordinators of



Logo of the One Province: "See, I am doing a new deed" (Isaiah 43:19) – In unity, embracing the MISSION, daring to make all things new.

the teams), a model for participation, reflection and decision-making with regard to life in mission of the Province. The nuclei are a form of organization to ensure the participation of all the Sisters in the Province. They are not mini

provinces. Each core has its peculiarities and its challenges. The Extended Council and the Province's action plan create unity between them. The term "core" has several meanings. From the Latin "nucleus", one could say

that this is the element which others join to form a whole. It is also the central point of something, the essence, the main point, whether material or immaterial. On the other hand, "core" is the "meat". In another context, a group of people with common interests is called a core. When we organized, we did not have in mind the depths of this word. However, we were inspired to make these six nuclei, "centers" of fellowship, "centerpieces" of life in mission that feeds the "essence" of the word expressed in Jesus Christ's evangelical proposal. They are part of a whole which unites to form the single province of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry in Brazil. It is in the "cores" that life happens! There we experience the beauty of the feeling sent by God to proclaim the good news to

the poor, the excluded, the marginalized, the migrant, and to those without a voice and without time. This nourishes the passion for Jesus Christ, thirsty for peace, justice, and respect for the fundamental rights of children, the elderly, women, youth and the family. It is in these "cores" where dreams, hopes, sharing of life, feelings, searching in common, and wishing to go to the existential peripheries arise, cultivating the dynamics of the missionary spirit and itinerancy. We were touching on all of this when visiting the cores, along with an awareness of the challenges of our differences, age, health limits, enormous distances between communities and other situations. All of this has not cooled our enthusiasm and our belief that, "something new is springing up," that we already see arising

among us. The One Province of Brazil is under construction. It depends on the bricks from each one of us, placed with love, trust and co-responsibility. The integration will go on to the extent that we are taking steps on the personal, community, and cross-community levels, in the core, between the nuclei, in the Province and in the Congregation. We are heirs of a charism that summons us and calls us to the "more". We are part of a body called a Congregation that has challenged us for many years to take steps in the restructuring of our communities, Provinces and forms of Government. The Lord led us here! Inspired by his word, we believe that He will continue to accompany us on this journey.

Challenged to Grow and Change

S. Josiane Mota Coelho
Tanzania, Africa

We, Sisters on mission in Tanzania in 2016, are living a time of welcoming, goodbyes, losses and new beginnings. This is a year that

challenges us to seek new pathways, to build the new with our own strengths, to welcome those who arrive and face the challenges of language and enculturation and being always open to the new and the different. It is also a year of saying goodbye to those who, after having given service, have to return to their country of

origin. Here, we have to find the best way to be a presence in a Church and a reality which differs in method, organization and expression of faith from anything that we have experienced. For example, we are challenged to constantly leave behind how we are accustomed to pray, to organize Sunday school, to work with youth, to



From the left: Sisters Josiane, Malathi, Nilza, Feliceta, Lilly

celebrate the faith, and to commemorate the dead, etc. This is needed to become acclimatized to a reality that welcomes and invites us, each day, to new and dynamic learning. A concrete challenge is communicating in the local language, especially as this regards expressions that go beyond grammar. All of this opens us continually to go beyond our “knowledge” and our certainties, to give space for the learning that we add to our luggage when we arrive in a new culture. Another experience that challenges us and enriches us is the fact of being Brazilian and Indian Sisters in Tanzania, which means that we are from different cultures, inserted in a culture different from both of ours. This means that we speak different languages in the midst of a people with different languages. And this is a great richness, because every day, we discover ourselves more like sisters, and we understand each other better, through the constant practice of patience, creativity and openness. Every step, every challenge, every achievement, every elaborate design, reaffirms the certainty that God is faithful, walking with us, although sometimes we can’t understand his plan, as with the sudden and unexpected death of Sister Elenice Buoro. However, we welcome it all in faith and with a commitment to serve in the best way possible so our presence



here as Sisters of Saint Joseph will be successful. An example can be seen in the way groups are organized in the Tanzanian culture. The people of Tanzania have an organizational system and distribution of tasks that work, although they are fairly hierarchical. There’s a great respect for the different functions within a group, as well as a respect for the participation of each one. Another aspect to be noted is how religious life is organized in the Church here, where there is a long-standing Benedictine heritage. There is a specific style, way of organizing religious life, and form of prayer. Common in this area are monasteries, large structures, and the clothing, the habit, all of which

characterize religious life. In this, we have to find the space and shape for formation and vocational animation. Besides being foreign, we have to consider the impact of our differences. We are the only Sisters in the diocese and some of the few in the country who do not wear a habit. It makes a difference, because it brings a new reality to a culture where uniforms are common and important. Nevertheless, there are young people who are delighted with our charism, whom we follow through visits to families in the “come and see” project, and who, in addition to the young people who interact with us, receive human and Christian formation. With all the challenges we encounter, we are full of joy and hope, as we move into the future of our mission in Tanzania.

And the Lace is Not Yet Finished...

Pricila Keumana
Associate, Brazil

In the month of May, I had the great joy of an experience that marked my life. Along with a few Sisters and an associate, Lúcia Ivani, I was in Le Puy, France, where my eyes beheld the landscape and the context where the charism of communion came to be. My

feet walked the holy ground of the mission of the Founder, Jean Pierre Médaille, and my heart was in harmony with his project that is small in name only. There were 16 participants and three translators coming from different contexts: Africa, Mexico, Brazil, India, the USA, France and Egypt. We were able to communicate thanks to the translators: Sisters Maria Elisabete Reis, Simone Saugues and Maria del Pilar Sordo Linares, for Portuguese, English, French

and Spanish. These days were a time of intense silence, prayer and contemplation. The facilitator, Sister Jane DeLisle, of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Orange, California, prepared a surprise each morning. She gave us a roadmap of how to live the day, everything based on the life and the origins of the Congregation of Saint Joseph. I experienced joy in the meeting and my involvement with our first women

leaders: Françoise Eyraud, Clauda Chastel, Marguerite Burdier, Anna Brun, Anna Chaley, Anna Vey and Marguerite de Saint-Laurent. The facilitator situated us in the story of these women, then gave us time to internalize the story of each one. After this time of prayer/contemplation, she proposed that we write a letter to the one who most touched our heart. My choice was Marguerite de Saint-Laurent, a deeply spiritual and educated lay woman who served at a hospital to help educate girls. She did not become a Sister of Saint Joseph, but lived a deep spirituality in the eremitic life. Each participant read her letter in her small group, where one person was chosen as leader. My group honored me as their choice, and I felt deep communion with this leader. Our facilitator gave us a prepared text

daily and some biblical texts and maxims. We did a reading in the group, and then moved to a time of personal prayer, during which we went to walk the streets of Le Puy, continuing our contemplation. Together at the end of each day, there was a sharing of the heart. I greatly appreciated our visit to the first kitchen of the Sisters. There the founders' names were proclaimed and the group responded, "They are with us!" Some other places also spoke to my heart: the square where some Sisters were martyred, the Cathedral, the hill of Saint Michele and that of Our Lady. We made a pilgrimage to Lyon where we joined in prayer at the tomb of Mother Saint John Fontbonne and also visited the Museum of the Congregation that gave witness to the austerity of the

first lay women and Sisters. During this meeting I felt I was continuing the project started in 1650. Step by step, through the years, the project was developing, as if weaving lace. We continue weaving, experiencing spirituality. This process is not yet finished, because we are giving it continuity. In our hands have all the tools to make new things, which, according to the spirit, are necessary, so that communion continues to grow. I can say that this experience delighted me, linking me with the action of the Spirit in the heart of the first lay women and Sisters, who welcomed the great treasure of the charism of communion. I feel more committed to continue, in the context of my day to day life, weaving the lace begun in Le Puy.



Group of program participants

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

Rossella Galli
www.csjchambery.org

E-MAIL

icc@csjchambery.org