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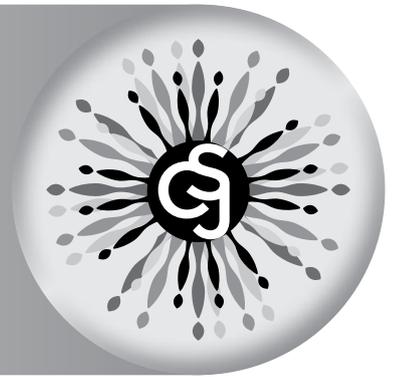
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GENERAL COUNCIL

25th Anniversary of the 1st Restructuring of the Indian Province



Sisters Alice Abraham (Pachmarhi), Ophelia Fernandes (Nirmala), Augusta Mylackel (Nirmala), Philo Pazhooruparambil (General Council), Lorraine Marie Delaney (Nagpur), Sally Hodgdon (General Council), Regi Komoroth (Tanmaya), Philo Pichapilly (Nagpur)

S. Philomena Pazhooruparambil
General Council

It seemed a coincidence that the 25th anniversary of the restructuring of the Indian province into Nagpur and Pachmarhi provinces was on

November 9, 2016, the day sisters from various commissions of the four provinces of India had come to meet with Sister Sally and myself in Nagpur, India. The presence of the general team, the provincials and sisters from the four provinces of India made the celebration of this historical event

SUMMARY

GENERAL COUNCIL

25th Anniversary of the 1st Restructuring of the Indian Province

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more meaningful and special. The homilist during the Eucharistic celebration, raised a question in the light of the day's feast - the Dedication of St. John Lateran. He said: "There are 4 Basilicas in Rome. Why four? One was sufficient." He further said, "Why restructuring? India could have remained a single province."

The fact remains that in spite of setbacks, which are expected in any restructuring, there are signs of new life in the provinces of India. The number of young women joining the congregation increased since the time the provinces were one, with each province working hard for vocations. More sisters came into leadership. It is now no longer one provincial and her team but four provincials and their teams. This possibility of working as a team is bringing more vigor and vitality to our presence as a congregation in India.

There has been conscious effort made toward achieving financial stability in each province. In the first months after the bifurcation, there was an unhealthy atmosphere because of the comparisons made regarding personnel, finances and income generating institutions. This has not dampened spirits but has moved

members to stretch themselves for the more, with a marked increase in generosity in each member.

At this moment of great joy and celebration, it was great to hear the "buzz" from different corners of the room as the sisters from the four provinces met together. Some were saying, "We in India celebrate the anniversary of the bifurcation while in Brazil our sisters celebrate their unification into one province. Maybe sooner or later, we in India will be celebrating the unification of our provinces into one!"

What does this say to us? It says that our sisters need to be aware of the reality India is facing today. Sisters are aging, vocations are fewer, we lack leaders to take up posts of responsibility in our government - aided ministries. There are not enough trained formators to accompany those in formation, even though we have an inter-provincial novitiate. The Holy Spirit was a powerful instrument in helping our major superiors as they discerned the bifurcation in 1991. Now the sisters in India need to continue to discern how best to share their resources as India faces these new



realities each day. No matter what the future holds for us, today, in 2016, 25 years later, we also recall that the Provinces of Pachmarhi and Nagpur further bifurcated in 2008, forming the new provinces of Tanmaya and Nirmala. So today we proudly stand as four provinces in India holding our charism with pride and integrity as a fire for future generations. With a great sense of gratitude in our hearts, we thank God for the rapid progress our four provinces have made in the light of communion which binds us together as one big family of Fr. Jean-Pierre Médaille.

PROVINCE/REGION/MISSION

NEW SAINTS

S. Mary Basil Manadan Paravattil (74)	Pachmarhi	23/09/2016
S. Catherine McNally (99)	USA	23/09/2016
S. Júlia Do Sagrado Coração Rabello (83)	Brazil	04/10/2016
S. Luisa Teresa Solli (92)	Italy	11/10/2016
S. Suzana Maria Possebon (102)	Brazil	16/10/2016
S. Benilda Giacomet (90)	Brazil	18/10/2016
S. Faustina Mary Kannikal (80)	Nirmala	25/10/2016
S. Maria Clelia Leal Boff (87)	Brazil	11/11/2016
S. Jeanne Louise Bonnefoy (90)	France	27/11/2016
S. Natalina Cauz (84)	Brazil	29/11/2016
S. Martin Paraniham (91)	Tanmaya	30/11/2016

Cultural Diversity and Conflict Management

S. Eliana Aparecida dos Santos

Brazil

The second session of the program, “Cultural Diversity and Conflict Management” was held October 16 to 26, 2016, at the International Center in Le Puy, France. I had the grace to participate in this program, created by Avila University, of Kansas City, Missouri, USA, to offer to the Sisters of Saint Joseph present in different parts of the world, a deep reflection about their everyday experience in community and mission.

The main objective of the program is to reach younger Sisters and Sisters in initial formation. Sister Patty Johnson, one of the creators of the program, expressed it thus: “This project was developed in response to a major concern of the global leaders of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, namely, to help younger Sisters as they are inserted in communities that are quickly becoming ethnically and culturally diverse.” This program has as its essential elements: non-violent communication and conflict resolution, critical engagement with “the different,” the role of empathy for people, and understanding right relationships in a community that reflects diversity. It is funded by a Hilton Grant and coordinated by Sister Griselda Martinez Morales, a Sister of Saint Joseph of Lyon – Mexico. The program is a new opportunity for many Sisters to reflect and develop practical actions in Consecrated Life today. This was the second of five planned sessions of 10 days each. This second program had as facilitators, Sister Gloria Philip (a Sister of Saint Joseph of Buenos Aires) and Sister Janet Gagnon (a Sister of Saint Joseph of Lyon - USA). The venue chosen for the courses is Le

Puy-en-Velay, the sacred place for the Congregations of Saint Joseph, where the Little Design was born.

We were 25 Sisters from 13 countries: the United States, Argentina, Mexico, Bolivia, Brazil, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Congo, Ivory Coast, Haiti, India, and Egypt, presenting a wealth of diversity of language, colors, flavors and dreams mixed with the language of the heart. It was possible to live in and embrace this diversity with the communion of our charism. Those were great days, lived intensely, which will mark our lives long after we have left. The instruction that was provided through the contents, the fraternal coexistence in a diversity of cultures, the communion with the Sisters who preceded us, the energy that flows from that place ... everything has become sacred and precious for us. The conflicts that we have are, for the most part, generated due to miscommunication. We find it difficult to listen carefully. Haste, impatience, and prejudice are internalized through not knowing and not accepting the other in their diversity. These are some of the elements that generate conflict. The challenge the program presented is to recognize



S. Deisi Toniazzo (Brazilian) e S. Imelda Petean (Argentinian)

these signs, identify them and work with nonviolent communication and a culture of peace. When identified as gifts, our differences enrich us. As Sisters of Saint Joseph, we assumed a charism that commits us to living relationships of communion. Through sharing about the realities of mission, community life, and service to the neighbor, we realized how our Congregation is alive and active in the world. Our charism needs to be lived. The world today is in growing political, social, economic and spiritual disorder, needing our presence, our action. Upon completion of the program, the participants were directed to develop a project to offer what they learned to groups of Sisters in their communities, provinces or regions.



Participants in the second session of the program, “Cultural Diversity and Conflict Management”

Discovering New Worlds

Czech University Students Learn of Christian Love

On October 27, a group of students from the West Bohemian University in Plzen (Pilsen) visited a Christian hospital in Regensburg, Germany with Gisela Heitz, csj, who is living in the mission in the Czech Republic since 1995, teaching at the catholic high school as well as at the local university

S. Gisela Heitz

Czech Republic

Why did you propose this experience?

Since University students in the Czech Republic are eager to cross borders to discover new possibilities, I invite them once a year to visit Regensburg, the sister city of Plzen in nearby Bavaria. This year's group was quite international, with 24 Czech students, 10 from the Ukraine and four from Russia. This year the highlight was a visit to the largest catholic hospital in Germany, which is also among the 100 best hospitals in the country. Run by the Congregation of St. John of God, which has 27 of its 1500 members

in Germany, the hospital in Regensburg is a large institution with 3000 employees. The core value for the Brothers of Mercy is Hospitality, which we all felt from the very beginning.

Why is it so different for Czech students to visit a Christian hospital?

Nearly all the students have no idea of what Christianity or Christian culture are – here authentically lived in the Christian hospital. When we entered a prayer room in the palliative care unit, some sensed the spiritual atmosphere while others laughed at this. Yet all were deeply touched by the respect with which these human beings, in all their frailty, are met. A student from Russia asked me: "What is this unit all about? We do not know this in Russia". After she learned about Christian palliative care, the support given to families and the respect for human life to the very end, she decided to speak about all this back home in Russia. The memorial book, which has a page, designed by the family or the staff, for every patient that died in the palliative care unit, made a deep impression on these students who are not familiar with a spiritual view of the end of life.

Why did you go to Germany to have such experience?

Because, as the students commented,

"we do not have such a hospital in the Czech Republic". (This is due to the communist rule from 1948 to 1989. During that time the Christian foundation of society was almost totally destroyed and the human being was considered from a totally materialistic perspective.)

What surprised you in the attitude of your students?

As they walked in silence through the intensive care unit, they were touched by the friendliness and gentleness that is shown every patient, often missing in the Czech Republic. Having seen the efficacy and having sensed the respect, responsibility and spirituality in a place where life is highly endangered, they realized that they can help to change the situation "at home".

What were the effects of this experience?

For some of them, the visit changed their view on human beings. They came to recognize that "this is a good place" with a different perspective on life, which their own non-Christian reality does not provide. Later in the afternoon when they visited places of spirituality, including the medieval cathedral, my young visitors were ready to be touched by its spiritual atmosphere because of such a morning. Crossing borders can be an "earth-shattering", yet enriching, experience..



The group of Czech students who visited the German hospital with S. Gisela

Ireland again on Mission: the Widow's Mite that delights the Lord

S. Mariaelena Aceti

General Council

Marian Connor returns to Tanzania with all the savings of the region

Returning to Tanzania after 12 years, Sister Marian Connor, 62 years old, the youngest member of the Region of Ireland, brings with her a year's savings to support the mission. Sister Marian, a nurse, responded to the appeal of the Congregation, and from December 28 on, she will be at Msalaba Mkuu, where the community works for the promotion of women and children. She was also asked to give assistance weekly at the Hostel in Songea where 50 adolescent girls are welcomed.

In Dublin, where she has been coordinating a home care service in the parish, Sister Marian leaves some 7 patients. Hers is a courageous choice, almost a gesture beyond all logic, when compared to the fragility of the group that supports her. They not only approved of her decision, but also delivered to the Congregation a large sum of money to support the mission, practically one-year's savings. The region of Ireland now has just nine sisters, of an advanced median age, in two communities. This is a reality that would have them, very reasonably, look with concern at the present, and want to retain their only hope for the future that Sister Marian represents. Instead, they choose to "give everything, all she had to live on," like the widow praised by Jesus in the Gospel.

"We cannot stop the Lord!" And speaking of Sister Marian, it is clear it

is He calling her to Africa according to Sister Celine Duffy who said, "Now am I the youngest. At over 70 years of age, I have much to do!" The Sisters, some of whom offer their service in parishes, while others, as Sister Betty Derwin, deal with the spiritual care of the sick in the nearby hospital, have maintained a passionate heart for the proclamation of the Gospel and for the promotion of human life. "Every day we feel touched by the great challenges facing humanity that we hear on TV or read in the newspapers," says Sister Mary Peter Raleigh, doyenne of the region. "We can no longer respond in person as we did before, but we keep ourselves informed, and we advocate for those now at the forefront, and we bring all to prayer."

It is from prayer that come the missionary zeal and generosity that have characterized the Irish missionaries in past centuries, but

also in the recent past. "I was born in Dublin, but I spent most of my life on a mission outside of Ireland," adds Sister Joan Margaret Kelly. "I was in Liberia during the war when we had to escape. I'm glad we're back in Africa with Sister Marian". Sister Sarah Goss, Coordinator of the mission, never misses an opportunity to remember with joy the many adventures of her years working in formation in Pakistan. Sister Eileen Silke recalls that, "we ourselves are the result of the missionary commitment of nuns who came from other countries. Not only at the beginning of our foundation, but to this day there are missionaries among us who gave their lives in Wales and Ireland, like our two Sisters Joan." Memories and a missionary spirit kept alive today still give the courage to be, in weakness, witnesses of a "Church going out", an example to the whole Congregation.



S. Marian Connor in front. Seated: S. Betty Derwin and Mary Peter Raleigh. Standing: S. Celine Duffy, Joan Kuzhivelly, Sarah Goss, Eileen Silke, Joan Barnes and Joan Margaret Kelly.

Volunteering at a Refugee Camp in Greece

In August of this year two Sisters of Saint Joseph from the congregation of Pinerolo in Italy volunteered at the refugee camp in Katsika, Greece. This article gives a small idea of this life-changing experience.

Editor's note:

The Chambéry congregation and CSJ Missioni of the Italian province together donated 3000 Euros which were used to purchase warm boots, jackets and gloves for more than 200 children.



Sisters Marirosa (back row, L) and Patrizia (back row, 3rd L.) sharing a meal with refugees.

S. Marirosa Orlando

Sisters of St. Joseph of Pinerolo, Italy

Our stay in Katsika lasted about 15 days, from August 3 to August 17. After the first shock we were able to move quite naturally among tents, rocks, veiled women and swarms of children. We were helped by the community of volunteers – young people, almost all Spanish-speakers and a few English-speakers – as well as by the morning meetings for coordination and formation. But it was not possible to remain in peace or get used to this way of living at the limits of what is human.

Besides our presence at the camp of Katsika, we gave time to the Yazidi. Shortly before our arrival a group of about 230 Yazidi left Katsika, an exodus within the exodus. They were probably threatened within the camp. They are persecuted non only by ISIS, which slaughtered thousands in 2014,

but also within Islam. Luckily there was a former orphanage where they can live, if in very close quarters. At least almost all of them are living in a structure with walls and a roof. But even here, as in the camp, living together becomes more and more difficult with the passing of time: bathing is difficult (Initially there were only 8 bathrooms for 400 persons, and 8 showers with only cold water. Now in Katsika things have improved a bit but this is not the case in the Yazidi camp where there are only two showers and they have water within the camp only two hours each day.); they are confined to a few square meters; many children and different needs. Tempers are short. Many Yazidi, both adults and children, never went out. We never saw them.

One evening we were invited to supper by Nawras, a Palestinian computer engineer who left Damascus after a bomb killed all the youth who were playing soccer with him. He crossed Syria and Turkey on foot, carrying on

his shoulders, two children. Then he got a boat to Greece. Stopped by the Turkish police, he threw himself into the sea, dressed in jeans and sneakers, and swam for three hours. He arrived in Greece the day before the signing of the agreement with Turkey to repatriate all the refugees.

A final experience, but not regarding importance. Near Katsika there is a hangar which has been turned into a storehouse for the five refugee camps in the area. It is there that we spent most of our time, since there were many volunteers and an urgent need for many hands. Without our help the organizers would have remained with things the way they were, put away without any specific order or criteria. Without organizing the food according to expiration date and clothing according to type and size, they risked not being able to access quickly what they needed. Thus, we spent entire days in intense heat (36° C / 97° F) under the metal roof, opening cartons, listing the contents, dividing things, re-

packing them, putting them on pallets and organizing the pallets according to certain criteria. But every once in a while we got a bit of chocolate. We had water and a nearby toilet and Spanish music at high volume! Without much direct contact with the refugees the work was heavy and not very pleasant, but it was what needed to be done at the time. This is what it means to be a volunteer.

And we continue here in Pinerolo – preparing boxes of winter coats, blankets, winter shoes, scarves and hats. And at the end of October, over the weekend of All Saints, we took them to their destination.



Organizing the storehouse

Associates Engage in Corporal Work of Mercy

S. Gertrude Mampilly and S. Maria Joseph Cheruvil
Tanmaya Province, India

On the 3rd September 2016 we had a meeting of the Associates in St. Joseph's Convent, Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, India keeping in mind the theme "Year of Mercy." S. Gertrude spoke on the merciful love of the Father and we discussed the Corporal and Spiritual works of Mercy. Then the members decided to practice one of the Corporal acts of Mercy, as they have done each year, by visiting the home for the aged run by the Missionaries of Charity. On the 25th September we, three sisters, Sisters Gertrude, Maria Joseph and Maria Fernandez and the Associates reached the home for the aged which houses about 35 men: 4 bedridden, others completely helpless, unable even to feed themselves. The Associates conducted a prayer service with hymns and readings from the Bible and prayed for the residents and their caretakers – the Missionaries



of Charity. After the prayer service one of the residents shared his heart-rending life story. A Catholic from Mangalore, he was an officer and well educated. Like the story of Job in the Old Testament – he lost all his family members, his job and all that he had and even his faith in God. After a few years of wandering, now he is in this old age home. He is a cancer patient and on crutches, having had one foot

amputated. He has re-gained his faith in God and has surrendered the rest of his life to God. We, Associates and Sisters interacted with him and the others, had snacks and tea which we had brought. It was a heart-warming experience for all of us and helped to open the eyes of the associates to better understand what it means to share God's mercy and compassion with those in need.

The History of the Sisters of St. Joseph Comes to Life

S. Barbara Bozak

USA

September 23, 2016 was a long-awaited day for the International Centre of the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Institut Saint Joseph in Le Puy-en-Velay, France. This day was the official opening of the archives and the Center of the Living History of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Since 2008 the Global Coordinating Group of the Sisters of St. Joseph has given attention to the common archives of the Sisters of St. Joseph, working to see that they would be preserved, catalogued and made accessible. There is still much work to do, but with the opening of the Center of Living History, sisters, associates, partners in ministry and the public now have access to an interactive museum in which they can trace the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph from 1650 to the 1970s, while placing it in its historical and ecclesiastical contexts. The whole can be followed in any of the five major languages used by the Sisters of St. Joseph worldwide: French, Italian, English, Spanish and Portuguese. In the near future the Norwegian language will be added, thanks to the Norwegian province of the Chambéry congregation. All visits will be arranged by the staff of the International Centre, which is in quite close proximity.

Having seen how the “Cammino” (the pilgrimage route from Le Puy to Compostello) is presented in Le Puy, Sr. Nadia, the Archivist for the Institut, had the inspiration of presenting our history using scenography and spent two years working with a team to design every aspect. Because it traces the history of both the church and society during the first 300 years of the Sisters of St. Joseph, it is a wonderful teaching tool. The pastor of a local parish and a high school teacher showed their enthusiasm and the value of this scenography, in their



S. Valerie Van Cauwenberghe (Canada) and S. Sally Hodgdon (Chambéry) listen to a letter which reflects the experience of Sisters of St. Joseph



Visitors follow the timeline in the Center of Living History of the Sisters of St. Joseph

expressed desire to bring parishoners and students to experience this interactive presentation. The history of the church, the world and the Sisters of St. Joseph comes alive in a visit to the Center of Living History.

The presence of guests from around the world added to the significance of the ceremony. The Global Coordinating Group, which includes representatives of the three international congregations (Lyon, Annecy and Chambéry) and the Institut Saint Joseph, was present, as were representatives of the four federations (France, Italy, Canada and USA), the general councils from Annecy and Lyon,

numerous sisters of the Institut, local dignitaries and friends. Among the honored guests were Joseph Rogers and Joseph Falzone, two trustees of the Anna Maria Moggio Foundation, without whose significant donation the project would not have been possible. Anna Maria Moggio was a devoted Catholic and a scholar of French history, which makes this project a real tribute to her.

There is great hope that the opening of this interactive museum will attract many visitors and perhaps some financial support to continue the work needed to protect the treasure which is found in the archives of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Over 20 Years of Loving Presence among Czech Poor and Sick People

S. Mariaelena Aceti

General Council

Sister Jaya Matthew was among the laureates of the Czech Caritas Award 2016

On Monday night, October 31, in the city of Prague, Sister Jaya Matthew, a missionary in the Czech Republic since 1995, received an award during a ceremony celebrating Caritas social workers who gave exceptional contributions to the furthering of charitable work. On the prestigious stage, in the presence of the Archbishop of Prague, Cardinal Dominik Duka, the President and the Director of the National Caritas and the ambassadors of Croatia, Italy, Yemen, Mexico, Palestine, Peru, Portugal, Russia, Spain and the Vatican, the humble Sister Jayinka (“Little Jaya”) – as her patients and friends call her – stood as a giant.

The Committee attached decisive importance to the spirit that has permeated Sister Jaya’s work. This springs from her own fundamental attitude to life, her personality and her lived faith. In the Plzen Diocese, the loneliest and the poorest among the sick have been received by Sister Jaya with warm compassion, devoid of condescension.

These are the people responsible for the award she received. They recognized her continuous and tireless efforts to make them feel welcome as people, with their own human dignity and their right to respect. Some of them have enjoyed her joyful and loving presence over more than 20 years and they attested to the fact

that every time she has visited them, she has been able to carry them away from their loneliness and sadness and back to an atmosphere of serenity.

“We remember how many people she accompanied during their last hours of life,” says Anna Srbová, one of her colleagues. “There are many footprints of S. Jaya and her ministry in Plzen and we cannot even imagine all that she has obtained for people through her prayers and sacrifices.”

Every year since 2008, eight men and women, one from each of the Catholic dioceses in the Czech Republic, have been honored during an impressive fundraising event. The 2016 event was a sold out concert of the Prague Symphony Orchestra. Almost 1200 people listened to “My Country”, a cycle of six musical poems inspired by Czech history, legends and nature, written by Bedrich Smetana, a very famous Czech composer of classical music. The 25th benefit concert of the Caritas of the Archdiocese of Prague collected funds for a hospital in Uganda in the unique atmosphere of *Obecní dum*. This Art Nouveau treasure, located in the very heart of Prague and containing masterpieces of the greatest Czech sculptors and painters of the 19th

century, is the most famous Municipal House of the city. From its balcony in 1918 the “founding fathers” proclaimed the independent Czechoslovakia while in 1989 its rooms hosted the first meetings between the communist government and the Civic Forum representatives, the meeting which signed the end of Communist dictatorship.

In this solemn atmosphere, those who were present for Sister Jaya’s award, including the director of Caritas, some friends and especially S. Celine Kalathoor and S. Gisela Heitz, from the Plzen community, together with S. Mariaelena Aceti, on behalf of the General Council, expressed their happiness and how proud they were of her.

But what was celebrated in Prague that night, goes beyond Sister Jaya; it is respect for the individual and their value and dignity that comes from faith. This is what the community of the Sisters of St. Joseph witnessed to in the Czech Republic. They have done this in face of the many prejudices of a “Post-Communist mentality”, in a country which, while saying that all people are the same, has created discrimination and intolerance. And in Europe it is the country which is considered “the least religious of all”.



S. Celine, Jaya and Gisela with Mr. Jiri Lodr, Director of Caritas for the diocese of Plzen

Sharing our Mission in Tanzania

S. Josiane Mota Coelho

Tanzânia, África

The mission in Tanzania is full of life. Even though we are few, we are a community present in two places: Songea and Msalaba Mkuu. In the village of Nambehe, Msalaba Mkuu, we continue our work with women and children. The group of seamstresses, “Mkomanile”, which aims to empower women, continues its activities, growing in independence and organizational capacity, leading to a better quality of life by generating income. The “Knitting” group, composed of young mothers who leave school due to pregnancy and who care for their children alone, has grown in numbers. They are the second group of young people who, by acquiring manual skills, achieve some financial independence, improving quality of life, self-esteem and the prospect of a better life. In August, they had another workshop, learning how to work with cotton and knit loom rugs.

The children’s school, “Chekechea in Awali”, also grew and now has 106 children. This year, as is traditional, it sparkled once again during the literacy graduation, celebrated according to African custom, with lots of fun, food, etc. We are happy to note once again that as our school has developed, children have grown remarkably in knowledge. They gave a presentation to a lively crowd, happily showing everything they have learned during the year. Through the noise of family members, the children read and showed that they understand English, the second language spoken here, which is difficult even for their parents. Something that excites us is to see how we are achieving the goal of working together for the school. All



Tanzanians working in the vegetable garden

six employees of the school, the parents who volunteer at school, the Sisters of St. Joseph present in the village, together take responsibility for the school, seeking solutions and trying to solve the difficulties. They recognize that they are responsible for the development of the school.

And, every year we can celebrate small achievements. In addition to the evolution in the education of children, we develop sustainability projects such as raising chickens and pigs, having a vegetable garden, a grain mill, etc. All are projects financed initially by foreign organizations, including those linked to our Congregation. It is worth highlighting the generous contribution of our Sisters, who share the fruit of their generous work, but who after giving this aid, continue their involvement.

We feel that improved interaction with parents provides a better quality of education. Recently, the generous help of our Sisters in France, not only helped the groups mentioned above, but enabled the creation of a new undertaking, a vegetable garden,



Children’s school “Chekechea na Awali”

an activity that the Tanzanians can do, but often can’t afford to develop. The group’s goal is to enrich the food supply and improve the income of families, especially those of poor women and grandparents with grandchildren or orphans, whom they care for with very little means. All this work is made possible by our Sisters’ generous financial support and their publicizing our work, especially the Sisters in Italy and France. This shows that our mission can go beyond our physical limitations, health or age. It shows that when we are creative and generous, even geographical and cultural distances can be overcome by participating directly with mission areas.

Indian Community Life Colored by Patriarchy and Hierarchy

S. Navya Neelamvilail

Pachmarhi Province

From October 22 to 26 a seminar on, 'Community Building and Leadership,' was organized in Pachmarhi, Madhya Pradesh, for the sisters of Pachmarhi Province, who are between the ages of 30 and 50. This age group includes more than half of the sisters in the province. These women, in the congregation for 10 to 25 years, are all fully involved in various ministries.

At the end of the seminar the group came up with a profile for their communities which focused to a great extent on the need for open dialogue and respect for each individual. Among the desires for community are: a community that is God-centered, a place where positive energy emanates from every member; a place where members dialogue, care for one another and communicating with one another is a daily practice; a place where everyone enjoys equality, justice and freedom. The sharing of responsibilities also played an important role in the suggestion that every member takes her turn to lead the community by sharing her skills, abilities, talents, knowledge and experience in a spirit of collective responsibility. Respecting the rights of every member in the community was considered important, as was the need to find time to celebrate and relax together on a regular basis. To better understand this profile, it is good to situate the community life of women religious in the Indian context, recognizing that hierarchy and patriarchy are part of the Indian cultural background.

A typical Indian convent has a superior



The group who participated in the program "Community Building and Leadership"

who often assumes the right to decide for the community. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry in India, influenced by the fact that they are part of an international congregation, did away with the term 'Superior' long ago and now use 'Animator', or 'Coordinator'.

Many congregations of women religious in India often have conflicts in their local communities. Not all members feel that they get fair treatment. While I was studying in 2012, a finally professed sister from another congregation and a religious for 18 years told me, "I have no permission to use a cell phone but there are others in my community who can use one." Another example is when two sisters of a local community were travelling by the same train on the same day. The school principal was in the air conditioned coach, the other sister in the sleeper coach. As a patriarchal country, the Indian culture itself supports such disparity. Most of the women religious in India

come from families with a patriarchal structure. As a result, in many Indian convents, though there are only women, community life is colored by patriarchal values.

India is a hierarchical society. According to a UK essay, "India is the most hierarchical society in the world and that, obviously, has an impact on its management style." Those in power or position directly or indirectly control the other members. "I am a teacher in the school. I do not have access to the common internet connection," remarked one of the sisters. This disparity is experienced not just by younger members but by all those who do not get an opportunity to hold positions of 'power' in their congregations. A close conversation with any sister will reveal similar struggles that they go through within their religious communities. The participants of the seminar expressed their desire to make their local communities a place of communion and harmony.

What Happened in the United States in the Election of 2016?

S. Linda Pepe

USA

The circus is over, the animals have been secured in their cages and all that remains is for the circus grounds to be swept clean. This is a sarcastic, but perhaps true, description of the presidential campaign and election of 2016 in the USA. Most Americans watched and listened in complete disbelief as one candidate and his political surrogates sunk to the lowest levels of bullying, intimidation, and character assassination.

The damage inflicted by this campaign and election extends well beyond the candidates and the two political parties. It has created two emerging societies that do not know how to communicate with each other and are diametrically opposed. One society is angry because it has been left behind in the quest for prosperity, and blames others for this situation. They see the face of society changing and are both angry and fearful of the new America that is emerging. Their instinct for survival means this new face of society has to be stopped before it becomes reality. The other society, though not all wealthy, nor white, nor women, believes we live in a democracy where “all men (and women) are created equal and enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Racism, prejudice and bigotry have no place in their society.

Two major factors contributed to the

loss of civility among Americans. One is the nature of social media. The anonymous nature of tweets and posts allows individuals to write hateful, ignorant, racial, bullying comments that can be tweeted and re-tweeted to fuel and fan the flames of prejudice and hatred. The other factor is the anger of the forgotten and ignored masses of middle class or low wage workers, with their anger fanned by the constant rhetoric that legitimized their belief that their economic misfortunes were the direct result of another’s actions.

The news media, previously relied on for informing and educating, joined in the circus atmosphere of sensationalism, misinformation and character assassination, commonly referred to as “yellow journalism.” Factual representation was replaced with the desire for ratings and sales, with little or no thought for who would be hurt by the story.

In the end, no one really won this election. The popular vote, the vote of the people, went to one candidate, while the electoral vote went to the other. Healing this country will be the task of the new President since he now represents all Americans.

Have we as voters learned anything from this long and disgraceful campaign and faced how prejudiced we are as a country? Have we listened to ourselves and others speak about a wall, closing our borders and deporting millions of



immigrants? Have we seen how easy it is to incite violent acts with just a few well-placed words or tweets? What was the role of religion in this outcome? These are a few questions that give rise to anxiety in the hearts of those who understand just how divisive this campaign was, and how important it will be to move forward, not in anger or disappointment, but in a constructive way.

Our country is in need of healing and reconciliation, and no one recognizes this more than we, as Sisters of St. Joseph, who profess this to be our Charism. Responding to this need, the Sisters of St. Joseph in the United States called for a National Day of Prayer for Unity and Reconciliation on November 11th. Words are, and always have been, the most powerful tools we possess. They can heal, hurt, divide or bring people together. In the United States, we will have to wait to see how our new President uses his words. We can only pray he chooses them wisely.

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