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GENERAL COUNCIL

The best between Reality and possibility

S. Philo Pazhuruparambil

General Council

General Chapter is a time when we come together, are with each other, share our joys and challenges and make collective decisions in line with our mission, vision and charism. At this time of history there are many questions in the minds of each one regarding when and where the 30th General Chapter will be, as the pandemic is still on the rise.

Although the pandemic and resultant lockdowns have made it impossible for us to meet face to face and enjoy our physical presence together, the boon of technology has brought us

together from 13 countries in one virtual world that we never dreamt of: 72 sisters on the zoom screen from 13 countries, speaking in five different languages!!!!

While it is true that virtual communication is not as natural or fluid as real life communication and is often seen as inferior to in-person meetings, zoom



conferencing has been one of the blessings of technology. It has offered us a space to have conversations, to brainstorm and collaborate effectively. All the tools needed for successful collaboration

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are available — whiteboards, screen sharing, even virtual breakout rooms. It is a temporary solution until people can meet again, and a fast fix to a slow problem.

We are aware of the many drawbacks to online meetings. They may minimize travel time and expense, but it is more difficult to engage with another person as we would in a physical meeting. We miss the chance of getting to be together and the lost opportunities to build more real and effective relationships. There is no doubt it is tiring to sit many long hours glued attentively to the screen. In addition, sometimes there are audio distortions, lack of visual clarity, loss of internet connection. However, beyond all these issues, the reality is that technology, used creatively, has connected us all in a virtual world. It has made

it possible for those who have patience and respect, to listen to the other person who is sitting many miles away who also has the same passion and love for the congregation as me.

What is more crucial and fundamental to understand is that, whether we are connected face to face or virtually, we are challenged and reminded to listen to our own inner voice and to each other with respect and affection, without judgement and bias. We realise that we need to go deeper into the reality of the world's brokenness and respond to the many faces of the poor. Sr. Sally, in her opening keynote address, invited us to have a free spirit to enter fully into our next journey. It is a challenge for each one to participate in sincerity and openness and to join the Chapter in prayer. It takes courage to leave the old 'Normal', which

may no longer be relevant to the present need, and embrace the 'Neo-Normal' along with its many facets which the pandemic brings with the many permanent changes in the world.

We are invited to be true to our call, to engage, pray, reflect and take part in the General Chapter with joy in our hearts as it is a grace-filled time for all the members in the congregation. It is a moment for us to look back with the gratitude in our hearts for all that has been, being aware of God's grace for the present moment, even with the pain and suffering that the pandemic is causing, and with hope, since there are so many good hearts in this world who bring consolation and joy to make a better world. Let us be united to help build a community that is immersed in the Spirit and connected to the world.

J P I C

Listening to the beat of Mother Earth in the hearts of poor brothers and sisters

S. Pasquale Antonio Costante

Italy

“God always forgives, we humans forgive from time to time, and nature no longer forgives.” This Spanish proverb

turns out to be a warning for each one of us, called to be a grateful guest and not an irresponsible master of the Earth.

In recent decades, the relationship between humanity and nature has changed. In fact, a marked ecological sensitivity has emerged from many quarters, which aims to address the serious environmental emergency that

we are experiencing. It is now clear to all that time has expired and it is urgent to do something immediately. It is precisely in the direction of the care and protection of creation that Pope Francis has moved, making the ecological theme a focus of the Church's magisterium of the last eight years. In particular, the 2015 encyclical *Laudato si'* has left

its mark not only on the Social Doctrine of the Church, but also on the political, economic and ecological processes of our globalized societies.

Preserving creation and cultivating the human being are not two different issues, but two aspects of the same. Let us ask ourselves an essential question: what is the original relationship between the earth and humanity? Biblical wisdom and modern science suggest some important reflections. Our planet does not need human beings. Nature does not need us, but we need her. Humans must care for and cultivate the earth to make it a home. Today we know that the human species was born as a local species: bound to a particular climate and ecosystem - that of the savannah of East Africa. Subsequently, it became a planetary species. Human history has been the story of a great diaspora, which has led each small group to adapt to different habitats. This has been possible thanks to extraordinary physical, behavioral and cognitive adaptations to the specific nature of the ecosystems and territories inhabited from time to time.

But today the earth cries out... September 23, 2008 was the overshoot day, as our voracity has exceeded the Earth's capacity for regeneration: our lifestyles are pushing the planet beyond its limits. The continuous demand for growth and the incessant cycle of production and consumption are exhausting the environment. Forests are dissolving, soils are eroded, fields are disappearing, deserts are advancing, the quality of available water is steadily deteriorating, seas are becoming acidic, storms are intensifying, and waste is overwhelming us, and all this while half of the world's population has yet to



know the taste of human dignity.

Social crises and environmental crises are locked in a deadly embrace. About 23.1 million people are forced to leave their homes every year because of extreme weather events. The pandemic is the litmus test of the fragility of the system. An intangible virus has managed to make the great ones of the North and the forgotten of the South both tremble. We are clearly at a crossroads! As Pope Francis suggests, "You don't come out of a crisis the same, (you are) either better or

worse." The human root of the ecological crisis invites us to make a cultural and spiritual revolution, a change of pace to slow down the frenetic and lacerating rhythms of our existence, welcoming and recognizing God's original and loving plan for creation, a joyful communion where we support and protect each other. Sharing, therefore, becomes the only possible raft to ferry our common home from the shipwreck of well-being to the luminous shore of living well, which represents, instead, a fullness of authentic personal and community life.



Responsible Consumption and Production: Embracing SDG 12

Christabelle Lemos

Ahmednagar, India

Our planet has provided us with an abundance of natural resources. But we have not utilized them responsibly and currently consume far beyond what our planet can provide. We must learn how to use and produce in sustainable ways that will reverse the harm that we have inflicted on the planet. Economic and social progress over the last century has been accompanied by environmental degradation that is endangering the very systems on which our future development and our very survival depends.

Each year, an estimated one third of all food produced, equivalent to 1.3 billion tonnes worth around \$1 trillion, ends up rotting in the bins of consumers and retailers, or spoiling due to poor transportation and harvesting practices, while 1 billion people remain undernourished and another 1 billion go to bed hungry. Reducing food wasted by both producers and consumers would go a long way in helping meet their needs.

We need to be aware of the fact that less than 3% of the world's water is drinkable, of which 2.5% is frozen in the Arctic, Antarctica and glaciers. Humanity must therefore rely on 0.5% of



the world's potable water for all of our needs. Agriculture is the biggest user of water worldwide, and irrigation now claims close to 70% of all freshwater for human use. Sustainable water management practices in agriculture would go a long way in reducing waste. At the same time we need to reduce the release of chemical waste into the air, water and soil.

Should the global population reach 9.6 billion by 2050, the equivalent of almost three planets could be required to provide the natural resources needed to sustain current lifestyles.

Achieving economic growth and sustainable development requires that we urgently reduce our ecological footprint by changing the way we produce and consume goods and resources. The efficient management of our shared natural resources, and the way we dispose of toxic waste and pollutants, are important targets

to achieve this goal. Encouraging industries, businesses and consumers to recycle and reduce waste is equally important.

There are two main ways for everyone to help: reducing waste and being thoughtful about what you buy and choosing a sustainable option whenever possible. Do all you can to avoid throwing away food. Reduce your consumption of plastic - one of the main pollutants of the ocean. Carrying a reusable bag, refusing to use plastic straws, and recycling plastic bottles are good ways to do your part every day.

Responsible consumption and production aim at "doing more and better with less," reducing resource use, degradation, and pollution, while increasing the quality of life. It is the responsibility of each and every person to ensure that we consume and produce in a responsible and sustainable manner to ensure the judicious and equitable use of our natural resources and thus protect Mother Earth.

Like Sisters coming home

Rosalba Scaturro

Italy

Sunday, July 4, 2021 was an historic day. At 6 p.m., the basilica of San Maurizio in Pinerolo - Turin, hosted a solemn

Chambéry, a dozen sisters from the French Province of Chambéry, all the sisters of the congregation of Pinerolo, the Laity of the Little Design, Bishop Derio and Monsignor Marco Brunetti, Bishop of Alba, with whom the sisters of Pinerolo collaborate on a pastoral level. The celebration was broadcast via live streaming so that the sisters from Argentina and Brazil were able to take part.

on May 1 (memorial of St. Joseph the Worker) the merger became official. Truly, St. Joseph, who acted according to his dreams, has continued to guide us on the journey towards a dream which, for so many sisters, began over twenty years ago. The Church's invitation to join forces to be a more effective presence, while keeping the charism alive, as well as the lack of new vocations and



Eucharistic celebration with the official ceremony of the merger of the congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Pinerolo with that of Chambéry. The ritual required that each sister from Pinerolo receive the book of the Constitutions and have her crucifix blessed. Present were the General and Provincial Councils of the congregation of

But how did the merger come about? Sister Gemma Valero, the last superior of the Pinerolo congregation, recounts: "The year 2021 (the special year of St. Joseph) brought us great news: on March 29 (the month of St. Joseph) the decree of approval by the Holy See was signed; the news reached us on a Wednesday (the day dedicated to St. Joseph). And

the aging of the sisters, guided this dream, bringing to maturity the decision, taken at our General Chapter held in Pinerolo at the Motherhouse in 2017, to initiate a process of fusion." At the Chapter, the Pinerolo congregation had expressed the urgency of moving toward a fusion. "Along the way," Sister Gemma further explains, "an interest of many

sisters towards the congregation of Chambéry was felt, dictated by an inner desire to be open to a 'different', to a 'new', to a 'more'... in a perspective of trust and hope. In October 2018 we went to Rome to meet with the General Council of the French congregation, and in April 2019, through a written survey, each sister of the congregation of Pinerolo was asked for her individual opinion. A clear preference for Chambéry encouraged us to send the official request for merger (dated May 18, 2019) to Mother Sally who, along with her Council, was in favor of starting the process."

This led to an intense

exchange of information, as well as participation in events and meetings in Rome, which allowed the Sisters from Pinerolo to get to know a wide and rich reality, spread throughout the different continents, in sixteen nations.

Sister Gemma commented that they felt welcomed as 'sisters returning home' after almost two hundred years. In fact, both congregations originated in Le Puy from the intuition of a Jesuit, Jean-Pierre Médaille. And it was from the headquarters of Chambéry (opened in 1812) that the foundress, Sister Speranza Vaudey, and her first two sisters, called by the then bishop, Monsignor Giuseppe Rey, arrived in Pinerolo in 1825. The path inaugurated by the Chapter found its definitive fulfillment on September 27, 2020, when the sisters of Pinerolo voted unanimously to request the merger with the congregation of Chambéry.

Taken from the article by Vincenzo Parisi in Vita Diocesana Pinerolese of June 27, 2021



A call of our present time, on the cross to be good news

S. Shakila

Region of Pakistan

In our present time, we often say the world is a global village, yet most of us are still very far from the lived reality of others.

Covid -19 has brought humanity to experience our oneness, the fact that there is some magnificent presence above and beyond modern society. Often times we lose sight of how we are interdependent and connected, readily limiting our own vision to what is local, thinking that many issues are far from us.

But now we are facing some serious issues, more aware of the misery of many who are next to us, in our neighborhood, in our families and in our own religious life. In Pakistan today a burning issue is violence against women, forced conversions and marriages of girls as young as 11 years of age, brutal gang violence and rape of small girls who are forced to earn money for their family as domestic workers. For women, religion, status and appearance do not matter, we are just bodies.

We sisters are well aware of these issues and work to and

create awareness among ourselves and our people so we might be a voice for the voiceless.

We are very dynamically involved in the ministry to create awareness. Now is the time to be personally engaged with the pain and fear of our own, Christian, women. Although we are working with women's catholic organizations, we still felt called

and suffering of the next-door woman, man and child, female and male.

We, St. Joseph sisters, religious leaders but above all women with compassionate hearts, enter into our wounded society with courage, with our own brokenness and vulnerabilities. Our charism invites us, at the grassroots level, to be more like our suffering



to be engaged with a larger network, to reach out and get involved on the grassroots.

For us the answer was Talitha Kum online training against trafficking, for Networks in Asia. For this purpose and to live our vision, seven sisters of our region of Pakistan are being trained through this network's online training sessions.

We have been aware of human trafficking, but now we have moved toward a new horizon, to respond to the pain

savior and be one with suffering humanity. We know ourselves called to raise them up and join the dance of our 2021 General Chapter logo. We strive to be women of hope for the hopeless.

This is a challenge and a risk as we in the region of Pakistan are stepping in to be one with the poor, jobless, wounded and disfigured humanity. We need to meet our dear neighbor, brothers and sisters, not on the way of cross but on the cross which offers life and breath.

A Doctor's Ordeal with Covid-19

Justin Lobo, MD

Province of Pachmarhi - India

Towards the end of the Lenten season, my family and I participated at a Eucharistic celebration by Cardinal Oswald Gracias, little realizing that one of us was infected with the dreaded SARS-CoV-2 (corona virus). After the Mass, we embraced each other, unknowingly infecting the entire group; thus began our worst nightmare.

The following week, my parents, wife, in-laws began manifesting symptoms. I was spared initially. Then started the phase of sleepless nights and days when I was taking care of everyone at home while attending to critical patients in Asha Niketan

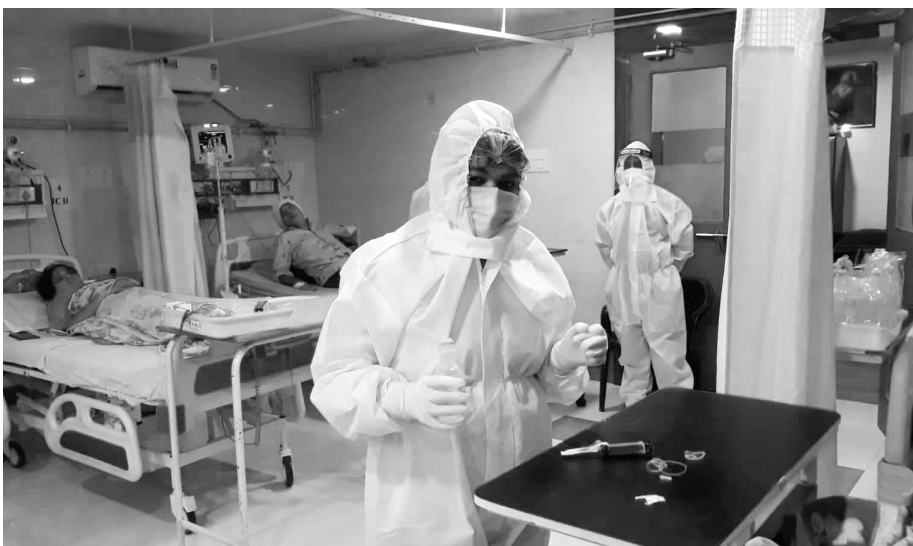
hospital, Bhopal, run by the CSI sisters of the province of Pachmarhi. My parents needed to be hospitalized in the Intensive Care Unit of Asha Niketan Hospital - my own hospital. They were put on oxygen.

Luckily, as the second wave of COVID-19 swept the nation and brought the Health Care System to its knees, Asha Niketan Hospital was prepared for the 2nd wave, with a good supply of oxygen, even when the ICU and wards were full, though once we did experience equipment and staff shortage but tried our best to keep our spirits up.

But the worst was not over yet. My son started showing



Dr. Justin affected by Covid being driven home in the ambulance



Dr. Justin and a nurse in the Intensive Care Unit

symptoms even as I, myself, started getting a skin rash, sore throat and fever. I felt stranded, in the middle of nowhere but did my best to stay positive about the whole situation. On one side I had a sick family to care for and on the other, a ward full of critical COVID-19 patients. At times I used to sit alone, helpless, praying to God Almighty. Faith gave me strength to keep going. The CSI sisters in the hospital gave me courage to deal with the situation, and friends started sending hot meals, covered with prayers and good wishes.

One day I, myself, was obliged to be admitted into the COVID-19 ward for IV fluids as I felt very weak. This was probably the lowest point in my life as I helplessly watched a nun losing her life to COVID. My condition did not allow me to intervene. It would not have helped much, anyway. The team of doctors at the hospital did everything possible to save her but in vain. On one side there were ailing patients and on the other the anxious family members who were

difficult to console. The COVID-19 patients were facing loneliness and emotional breakdown.

Finally, every family member recovered for which I will always be grateful to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry for their support. The hospital's sisters played a vital role in arranging essential injections like Remdesivir on a daily basis. The helping staff used to stand in queue even past midnight sometimes to get oxygen cylinders refilled. The Covid Patients were

provided with nutritious food by Asha Niketan community.

Because COVID-19 is a new disease, there was no clear evidence or consensus for the correct way to manage a critically unwell patient. Thus the doctors and nursing staff were faced with a hitherto unknown challenge. The thought that 92% of the Covid patients got alright and went home from our hospital gives me hope and energy when deathrates in Bhopal hospitals were many more.

Interculturality and Consecrated Life

S. Maria Cristina Gavazzi

Italy

Today, more than yesterday, we are invited to look at the enormous intercultural challenges of the future of humanity, the Church and consecrated life.

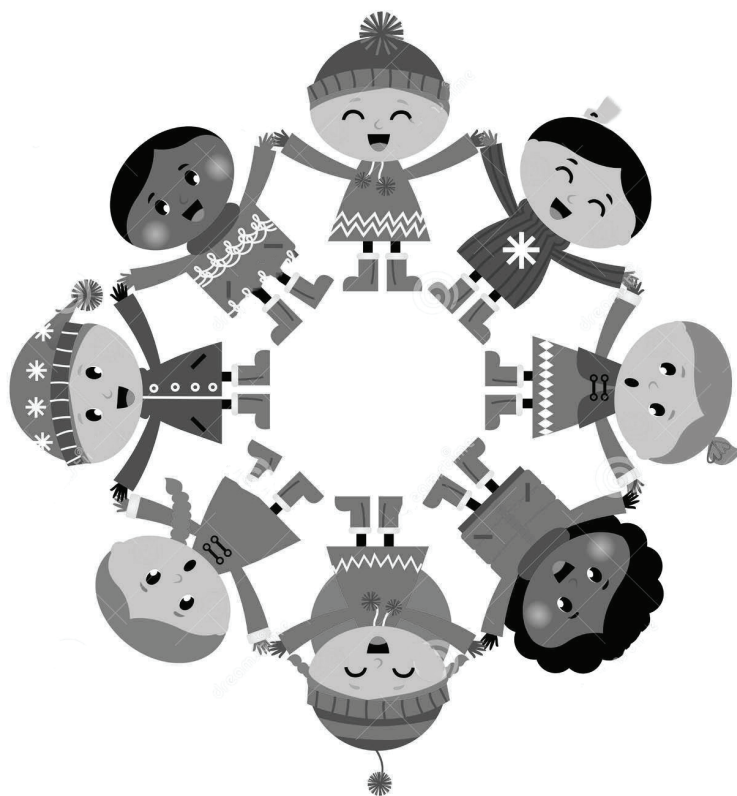
Culture is the result of the exercise of human freedom. It originates by different ways of using things, working, expressing oneself, practicing religion and forming customs, different lifestyles and values.

Human beings freely establish relationships through which we seek and give meaning to existence, to personal and social daily life. Cultural relations arise from the human need to

give meaning to life shared in common - as ideals, values and attitudes. Each person is unique and unrepeatable who identifies oneself through culture. At the same time, it is an identity socially shared with other human beings

who are unique and unrepeatable.

The first step of the process is to inculturate oneself into the culture, that is, to become critically aware of it. Critical awareness of the culture itself is the condition for relating positively to cultural



diversity. The second step is inculturation in another culture. It is like moving from your house and joining another family where you arrive with what you are and where you learn another universe of social relations with which you give meaning to life, organize the community, produce and distribute the necessary goods.

Inculturation is always an incomplete process. Social contexts change a lot and change quickly. Cultures also change according to the dynamics of local and international contexts. For this reason, inculturation, from the perspective of the consecrated life, requires common discernment, based on an authentic life in the Spirit. Inculturation thus understood is the companion of the evangelizing mission of consecrated life at the service of the mission of Christ, trying to be like Him.

Inculturation has led consecrated life to experience

multiculturalism as a normal condition for congregations and their communities around the world. The Gospel of Jesus is so universal that it can be incorporated into any culture and humanize it. In order to be a Christian, it is not necessary to divest oneself of one's own culture, but to open oneself to the conversion that presupposes the experience of mercy that leads to reconciliation with God, through the encounter with the other and reality itself. Every culture needs this healing experience to grow in humanity.

Interculturality is a complex process which is not without conflict. Recognizing different cultures and the ability to live in multicultural contexts, respecting diversity and even enjoying it, is an important step.

A simple description of interculturality is the mutual exchange between cultures, which can lead to the

transformation and enrichment of all the subjects involved. It is a process that participates and interacts with the historical, social, economic and political context in which it occurs.

Intercultural communities are located in a place, in a specific cultural context, which one cannot and must not leave without consideration. It is an interculturality in relation to a local context that requires learning a language, adopting lifestyle, food, accommodation and transportation.

What excites and leads to interculturality is sharing the mission, making it an object of common discernment, planning sensibly and evaluating it realistically. This requires consecrated women with an authentic life in the Spirit, nourished by the Eucharist, able to think freely and critically and dedicated to the mission with generosity.

NEW SAINTS

S. Marjorie Fish	84	USA	19.06.2021
S. Ilse Maria Gasparin	89	Brazil	14.07.2021
S. Maria Candida Mezzomo	92	Brazil	17.07.2021
S. Nicolina Leonarda Franco	98	Italy	25.07.2021
S. Maria do Carmo	92	Brazil	29.07.2021
S. Teresa Nicolini	92	Brazil	31.07.2021
S. Paolina	97	Italy	04.08.2021
S. Maria Zélia	93	Brazil	04.08.2021
S. Roselyn Mondoeth	69	Nirmala	06.08.2021
S. Judith Vieira Velho	89	Brazil	19.08.2021

A cross cultural experience in Tanzania

S. Sumaira

Pakistan

As a 7th year temporary professed I am the second sister from the region of Pakistan to share the charism of oneness and the spirituality of littleness as it is lived in Tanzania. The general team and regional coordinating team offered me this opportunity at a time when I was experiencing some health problems, but after a time of reflection I felt a call within my call. So, surrendering myself to the providence of God even with the fear of Covid-19, I embraced the surprises and the thrill of a new adventure, beginning with my first plane flight.



On March 21, 2021, I reached Songea, Tanzania, where I was heartily welcomed by the sisters in the community. I am having an experience of readiness and obedience like that of our patron St. Joseph who is my motivation to be a joyful woman.

I began my time here with 2 months of Kiswahili classes which helped prepare me to live the local culture and traditions in light of our charism of oneness. I believe that the beauty of the world lies in the diversity of its peoples. Every culture widens the mind and the spirit. When visiting families I experience the tangible

presence of God. The people are very generous and friendly, with a rich culture, each tribe having its own unique traditions.

I am working under the compassionate guidance of Sr. Malathi in the CSJ Chambery Hostel in Songea, helping the students in biology and chemistry. We have also planned some extracurricular activities with the students, arranging computer classes and working with them on paper and plastic recycling.

In the month of June Sr. Malathi and I visited the Njombe Region for vocation animation. It was like being a traveler into the unknown, since the place and area was totally new to us. It was a splendid experience visiting the secondary schools, making the students aware of the value of education, as each sector of life needs quality education. We tried to help the youth to discern their calls and interests, knowing that this is how we become sparks



of light, faith and hope for one another. We are very hopeful that we will have a young girl with us to share the good news, embracing life together.

At this crucial time of Covid-19, technology is performing a role, helping us

to reach out. The community in Tanzania has created a Facebook page, CSJ Mission in Tanzania, to reach out with apostolic zeal. Together, as a CSJ family, we are living, incarnating, bearing and channelizing love and communion here on this sacred planet earth.

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