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CSJOURNAL

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry

November - December • Year 2024 - n . 6



GENERAL COUNCIL

SUMMARY

SYNOD ON SYNODALITY AND JUBILEE 2025

Sr. Dolores Lahr CSJ

General Superior



The 'Synod on Synodality' officially closed on October 27, 2024, and the Final Document was published on October 29, 2024. The Final Document expresses awareness that the call to mission is, at the same time, the call to the

conversion of each local Church and of the whole Church, but in reality, this conversion must begin with the transformation and conversion of each individual. In his closing address, Pope Francis stated that "time is needed in order to arrive at

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decisions that involve the whole Church.” Furthermore, the conclusion of the Synod meetings in Rome does not put an end to the synodal process.

What better time to reflect on transformation and conversion than the Jubilee Year of Hope, 2025? The theme of the Jubilee Year, “Pilgrims of Hope,” builds on that of the Synod, “For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission.”

The Final Document is worth the time and desire to read. It is good reading for a pilgrimage. It may be read as a journey, a pilgrimage, wherein the pilgrim takes time to pause and pray and reflect on the journey. What is happening within? What

insights and inspirations are coming from the Holy Spirit? Am I reading something new? Something I never thought of? Something I disagree with? What are my companions on the journey sharing with me, and I with them? How am I being transformed and converted?

The Final Document is filled with a vision of a synodal church, a church of the future, a church that will take time to evolve, a church that will take the energies and input and patience of all God’s people to be born anew. The five parts of the text take the reader through “The Heart of Synodality,” the development of synodality, and what emerged in the first session of October 2023.

“On the Boat, Together,” speaks of relationships that are formed in the interweaving of vocations, charisms and ministries. The image of fishers of women and men continues with the section entitled “Cast the Net,” covering ecclesial discernment, decision-making processes, and a culture of transparency, accountability and evaluation. “An Abundant Catch,” calls our pilgrim Church to cultivate new forms of the exchange of gifts and renew the interweaving of the bonds that unite us in the Church at a time when the experience of being rooted in one place is changing profoundly. The final section, “So I Send You,” challenges us, pilgrims of hope, to look at a particular step we need to take which is caring for the formation of all, of the People of God, all as synodal missionaries.

As Sisters of Saint Joseph, Associates and Partners in Mission, what is our call? How do we become ‘synodal missionaries?’ What is our response to the Synod on Synodality, to Jubilee 2025, to be Pilgrims of Hope? Our charism calls us to unity and reconciliation, so needed in our fractured world. Let us journey together in this synodal path, this pilgrimage of hope.

REDUCING FOSSIL FUELS: RAISING CONSCIOUSNESS

Sr. Marirosa Orlando CSJ

Italy



I continue to experience how important a school is to truly build a more civilized society, as well as assuring an ever more adequate cultural approach for everyone. During the second week of school in all my classes at the High School of Science, Juvarra de Venaria Reale in Turin, we dealt with the issue of fossil fuels. This was just before the meeting of the UN General Assembly in New York, whose agenda included the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. And there was fear that this theme would not be seriously dealt with unless there was decisive pressure from an informed public who knew what was at stake. I also had some good opportunities



with my colleagues, directly in the teachers' lounge during our conversations and I tried to engage them to sign the petition asking for a reduction in fossil fuels. Unfortunately

it was at the very beginning of the school year and I was not able to organize a collaboration between science, civic education and literature so they might

collaborate with their specific insights to make the discussion deeper and more meaningful. I was surprised that few had known about the event and many thanked me that they were able to add their voice personally, if not by a lesson within the needed timeframe.

The theme was presented in a more general way for the younger students, while for the older students whose focus was science, I gave very specific input which talked about the possibility

of alternative energy sources with a wealth of detail in line with their background. For them, the synthesis of the objectives approved in Dubai was very specific. In every lesson, after an introduction to the topic using a video, they were invited to have a discussion in small groups to encourage the participation of each one, with the task of sending a brief synthesis of the opinions and observations which emerged. The data received confirmed, to a great extent, the interest and

engagement of the youth.

I am grateful to the International JPIC Commission for the precious and up-to-date information and the encouragement to act consciously and with conviction to bring these ideas to realization in our daily life and lifestyle, using every possible occasion to help create an ecological mindset that is convinced, proactive and willing to get involved.

FAITH-CONSISTENT INVESTMENTS

Sr. Maria Cristina Gavazzi CSJ

General Council



On November 11-12, 2024 the second conference on Mensuram Bonam was held in London, a global gathering on Catholic investment. More than ninety financial professionals, church leaders and academics arrived from more that sixteen countries to

discuss the issue of uniform guidelines for investments consistent with the catholic faith.

There is a growing international interest in this market, so that networking is both an opportunity and a necessity. “The Mensuram Bonam conference was a mini-

synod for the financial sector, from providers of index and data to investment consultants . . . and created an avenue for catholic investors and service providers to further develop a Christian capital ecosystem,” said Jean-Baptiste de Fransuu, French economist and president of the Vatican Bank



since 2014.

Building on the availability of various financial entities to network in order to develop an investment market consistent with catholic faith and values, a number of activities and projects that make the goal more attainable are at the starting point. Notable among the actions and resolutions from the working groups following the conference is the initiative of Bloomberg Index Services, which will collaborate with other entities to create a new market index, the “Mensuram Bonam Index.” In this way it will be possible to resolve one of the principal problems of the market, the lack of a system to measure and evaluate investment portfolios in a way consistent with the faith that is recognized and accepted by various countries.

“It is necessary to develop a global ecosystem for

investments consistent with the faith, which is growing more and more, in terms of volume and investment, and awareness,” affirmed Elena Beccalli, rector of the Catholic University of Milan, speaking at the conference.

“An attempt to estimate the monetary value of ‘Christian capital’ indicates that this represents more than 800 billion euros in Europe,” the rector pointed out, adding that only a limited number of investment funds incorporate principles consistent with the faith.

With the ambitious objective of bringing a greater consistency of approach and a clearer classification of the products to contribute to and stimulate the market, the Knights of Columbus (Catholic organization founded in the United States in 1882) began a collaboration with the Catholic University of America

to establish a new non-profit consortium to guide Catholic investors at the global level on proxy voting. There is also a common commitment to publish a document that analyzes the impact of investments consistent with the faith on the long-term performance of portfolios. Almost all the entities present at the London event have taken steps to create a coherent ecosystem of Catholic finance. Catholic finance is seeking to align investments with the faith and so to send a strong signal of values to the world of business.

As a congregation, to be in line with the magisterium of the church regarding finances, during 2024 we published two important documents: a congregation-wide statement on the politics of investment and a statement on ethical and sustainable investments.

LIVING INTERCULTURALLY

Sr. Susan Cunningham CSJ

USA



I am a member of the Congregation's Interculturality Commission who has lived in several different cultures over the years. I've lived in Brazil,

Pakistan, Rome, and Sicily for varied amounts of time, and each experience taught me a great deal. First and foremost, I learned that although I came to minister

to others, I had some dying to myself and learning to do. I became aware that I was privileged and discovered that I was prejudiced, which was a surprise to me. Before



I could be for the people, I needed to learn from the people who and what was important to them. What were the things they valued in life, their beliefs, their language, the ways they communicate, their celebrations, how close they want to stand speaking to me, if I shake hands or not when I meet someone? I had to listen, be curious, question and open my eyes. I had to develop an attitude of humility, respect and openness to learn from others.

I was fortunate to live with sisters who showed me the way to do all this. In the Northeast of Brazil, I traveled by bus from mission to mission with limited language and a note in my pocket where to get off the bus. The sisters did not baby me but threw me into the life of the people, even sitting among the chickens that came on board the bus. The people offered what food they had brought for the journey.

They were, in fact, my teachers. Each community was so welcoming and I witnessed our sisters truly living for the people. They were selfless and their witness forever marked my life.

Although I read a lot about the culture of Pakistan before going there, I made many mistakes. I needed to learn from the people, our sisters, and the young women who were in formation. If we were preparing them for religious life, we needed to know all we could about Pakistani life first. We discovered that we also needed to prepare them for life within the congregation. We were all learners, which actually made our community life a good one.

Life in the General House in Rome taught me that each country has its own way of doing things. We had sisters from India, Brazil, and Italy, and the four of us on the Council were from India, Brazil, Denmark and the USA. What a challenge! I learned that we all had gifts to offer to our community life. For me, I discovered the importance of not only giving but also being open to receiving.

I went to Sicily to minister with unaccompanied minors who were refugees mainly from Africa. Many came to Italy in dinghies and witnessed the death of many of their companions during the voyage. I went to be a presence, to listen to

their stories of life in their home country and their need to flee as well as the horror of their journey. I helped prepare the food for each day's meals and never chopped so many onions! They were so warm and appreciative. My Italian was not so great but I believe they knew we cared.

In Sicily, I lived in a community with another sister from the USA and one from Italy. Both sisters were from different congregations. I was a newcomer in a community that had an established way of living together and we didn't share how we, as a new community, desired to live together. Reflecting on that experience, I know it might have helped our living together if I had claimed my desire to share how we might live as a new community. Now, after all these experiences I read books and articles on interculturality and wish I had read Anthony Gittins book before going to Sicily.

I'm grateful for each of these experiences that gifted me in so many ways. I learned so much and, hopefully, touched the lives of those with whom I shared life.

CHILDREN'S DAY RALLY: A POWERFUL PLEA FOR PEACE

Sr. Anoop Jose CSJ

Tanmaya/India



Each year, November 14 is celebrated across India as Children's Day in honor of Pandit Jawahar Nehru, the first Prime Minister of Independent India. This year, the occasion witnessed an extraordinary event that embodied both innocence and resilience. At St. Joseph's Convent Senior Secondary School, Pulluvazhy, Kerala (a southern state of India), over 800 students and 41 teachers came together to organize a rally advocating for peace and non-violence. This rally was imitated by the Management and staff, headed by Sr. Anoop, the Principal of the school.

On the bright

morning of Children's Day, young voices echoed with passionate calls for a war-free world. The rally, a moving visual spectacle, sought to raise awareness about the devastating impacts of war and to promote harmony within society. The participants, with colorful placards in hand and enthusiastic chants on their lips, conveyed a powerful and heartfelt message: "No more war, we want peace!"

The rally began at the school ground, where children showcased their creativity through poignant costumes symbolizing the harsh realities of war-affected lives. Some

were dressed as displaced refugees with makeshift bags slung over their shoulders, others as injured victims with bandaged arms and painted scars, while a few portrayed tear-streaked faces clutching empty bowls. Each costume told a story of suffering, capturing the stark reality of war-torn lives.

As the rally progressed through the main streets of the city, the young participants carried vibrant banners inscribed with slogans like "Let Us Play, Not Fight" and "War Steals Childhood." The air resonated with the rhythmic chants of "No more war, we want peace!" and the melody of children's voices singing



Sr. Anopa with the students marching in the rally

songs of unity and love. Teachers and volunteers accompanied the children, ensuring their safety and maintaining the harmony of the event.

Passersby stopped to watch the rally, visibly moved by the raw emotion and powerful symbolism. Their innocent yet impactful display served as a stark

reminder of the devastating consequences of war and the urgent need for peace.

This rally was more than a Children’s Day celebration; it was a call to action. It underscored the resilience and determination of young voices to demand a better world—one where childhood remains untouched by the shadows of violence.

Through their heartfelt pleas and vivid expressions, these children sent an unmistakable message: let childhood be a time of joy, not of war.

The event resonated deeply with everyone who witnessed it, leaving a lasting impression of hope and a plea for a brighter, more peaceful future.

NEW SAINTS

Sr. Teresinha de Lourdes Camatti	92	Brazil	11.11.2024
Sr. Mary Natalie Chirayath	78	Nirmala	21.11.2024
Sr. Egidia Vitti	102	Brazil	21.11.2024
Sr. Liguori Parambaloth	87	Tanmaya	25.11.2024

25 YEARS OF THE WELCOMING COMMUNITY PROJECT

Sr. Marina Melo Vasconcelos CSJ & Sr. Vera Lúcia dos Santos CSJ

Brazil



On October 4, 2024, the Welcoming Community, which serves street people, celebrated the 25th anniversary of its foundation. The date was commemorated with a festive Mass, cake, snacks, soft drinks, and lunch with homeless people, volunteers, and Sisters of St. Joseph.

It all started in September 1999, in the square in front of Santa Cecilia

Church, São Paulo/SP, when a group of homeless people asked Sr. Marina for a place to bathe. Sr. Marina took the request to Sr. Emília Margonari, who at the time was a social worker at a social organization of the Santa Cecilia Parish. A meeting was arranged with the parish priest who, after consulting the board of directors, permitted them to use one of the houses of the parish.

Through the intercession of St. Joseph activities began: breakfast, showers, distribution of clothing, washing and drying of clothes, a place to store parcels and personal documents, referrals to hospitals and jobs. Little by little, volunteers came forward to run the fund-raising bazaar that would help maintain the project financially. In 2001, Sr. Martha Alexandra took over the coordination of the



project and invited Sister Maria Madalena, a Sister of Charity of the Holy Cross, to collaborate. On November 28, 2002, Sr. Martha Alexandra passed away and the leadership was given to Sr. Maria Madalena.

Due to the growing number of drug users living on the city streets, Sr. Maria Madalena, together with Claretian Brother Bernadino Foiato, created the Novos Rumos Association, which had as objectives: stimulating the process of regaining self-esteem and human dignity; reintegration into the family and society; guidance on health and quality of life; encouragement to work and

psychomotor development through creative activities such as handicrafts; enabling the learning of the Spanish and English languages and access to computers. In 2014, due to a lack of funding, the project came to an end.

With the closure of the Novos Rumos Project, volunteer Zilma Coutinho, with a lot of passion and wisdom, convinced the Center's board of directors to provide a space in the parish hall for the care of homeless people. This is how the Welcoming Community Project came about, made up solely of volunteers. The services were limited to twice a week, focusing on fraternal treatment and restoring

human dignity, with a moment of spirituality with Mr. João Coutinho, a shower and breakfast prepared and served by the volunteers.

In April 2020, the Diocesan Curia requested that they move from the hall since it was to be demolished. The outreach now takes place on the sidewalk by the Santa Cecília subway station. In Sr. Marina's words, "The project became homeless like them".

Currently, the Host Community continues to seek better conditions and social integration of the homeless population into the local community, serving breakfast at Largo de Santa Cecília.

WATER SCARCITY IN BALOCHISTAN

Sr. Sinthia Tariq CSJ

Pakistan

As a temporary professed sister from the Quetta community in the state of Balochistan I would like to share some information on the situation of water scarcity in our state. The water crisis is

severe in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, as well as in other parts, and we, the Quetta community of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry, are facing this along with the people. There's nothing more essential

to life on earth than water and so we need to buy water which is very expensive. In our apostolate, a large preschool or kindergarten, we need to fill water tanks daily to meet our ordinary needs.





The water crisis in Pakistan does not give an indication of ending anytime soon. Surveys estimate that Pakistan is going to confront drought conditions by 2025. Those living in Balochistan are already suffering from an acute shortage of drinking water.

Earlier, it was announced that the work on two dams to be built for water storage had resumed, but no progress is in sight. As a result of the conditions, people continue to pump water from deep in the ground, with some wells going down more than 1,000 feet, many times the depth of wells in the past, which went down between 200 and 300 feet.

In Balochistan, a worrisome fact is that drinking unclean water has become normal. And due to this, people are suffering from serious diseases across the province, including cholera, dysentery, hepatitis A, typhoid, and polio. These diseases are very serious and sometimes fatal.

Pope Francis' message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation focuses on water as a precious resource and access to it as a human right. He said that "access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of

other human rights."

Here in Balochistan lack of water is the primary way in which we feel the effects of climate change. This is an ongoing concern which will affect the generations to come. We pray that they may grow in knowledge and respect for our common home and in the desire to care for the essential good of water, for the benefit of all. Each of us is called to use water in an ethical way, so everyone might enjoy this indispensable resource. This will be possible if we respect and care for the gifts received from the Creator, and in particular rivers, seas and oceans since water connects every aspect of life.

BEYOND ALL BORDERS THE GOSPEL CROSSED OUR PATH

**Sr. Claire Combarel CSJ &
Sr. Marie-Joséphe Chorot CSJ**

France



The province of France/Belgium has great luck, beyond all borders, to welcome many different cultures thanks to the groups who come regularly to France. But from November 1 to 20, 2024 a small group of 8 sisters from France (Christiane, Claire, Dominga, Helena de Fatima, Jona, Marie-Joséphe, Marie-Thérèse et Santhi) visited the mission of our Indian sisters.

Since its foundation this is the first time that the province of France/Belgium planned and prepared a visit to the places of foundation in India with a group of French sisters. During the same period the Association of the “children of Jehangirabad” had organized its trip with a group of 14 lay persons to go and see the implementation of its project on site. Joy was added by the presence of Sister Dolores,

our superior general, and our archbishop, Msgr Thibault VERNY, to strengthen the link between the Congregation in India and the diocese of Savoy.

Our brothers and sisters in India who express themselves with many gestures, dances, songs, colorful decorations, washing of feet, warmly welcomed us. It is thanks to the foundation made by French sisters in India that we were received with such honor and blessings. These same gestures were also experienced by sisters Helena and Santhi when they visited the families of Nirmal and Sapna, the two youngest sisters in France. These fraternal gestures were very powerful and moving for us.

The three weeks we spent engaged with the ministries of the sisters in hospitals, schools, rural





villages, with mentally challenged and deaf-mute children full of life gave us the opportunity to be immersed in the culture of the Indian sisters and people.

We became aware of the difficulties, the constraints linked to the political situation of the country, with poverty and misery living side by side with wealth. We were very touched by the missionary zeal, the presence of young sisters, novices, postulants, candidates . . . their youth, their faith, their vitality, their formation.

In each province we discovered the life of simplicity, joy, gift of self and courage of the sisters who left their state to live the challenge of inculturating themselves in realities which are very different, such as Europe and other places. The face and expression of each person we met wherever we went gave us a desire to live,

to love, to be involved when we return.

We met almost three hundred Indian sisters during our time in India. What joy it is to be part of a large family of St. Joseph, to be a leaven of unity among us all. On November 17, the celebration of the jubilees of 25, 50 and 60 years of religious life for four of us, brought together a large number of sisters, families and friends. Together with the Indian archbishop of Bhopal and the bishop of Savoy, the entire assembly gave thanks for the 170 years of the Congregation's presence in India. The mutual sharing of two cultures gave us great joy and enriched each of us. All the visits we made with the association "Children of Jehangirabad" were also rewarding with their precious support for putting so many people back on their feet with dignity.

The small seed sown

170 years ago by the French sisters has grown and become a huge tree with countless fruits thanks to the mission of our sisters and lay partners in India. Our connection was reinforced by a better understanding to live the joy of interculturality as the international family of St. Joseph. This trip to India was a real challenge for both India and France. We were able to make this dream a reality thanks to the tenacity, perseverance and the organizational gifts of those responsible in India and France.

The province of France/Belgium is most grateful for the generosity of the 4 provinces which sent 6 Indian sisters to reinforce the mission in Savoy, in the place of our origins. Their active and dynamic presence led us to an unforgettable visit to India.

PRECIOUS TIME WITH THE SISTERS IN WEST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT – USA

Sr. Ignes Cristina Malinoski CSJ

Brazil



Being with the Sisters of the Province of United States in West Hartford for a few months was very special for me. Meeting them and spending time with them daily made me feel the true spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph!

I arrived in Harford, Connecticut, in early spring, a time of change and hope! I was welcomed at the airport

by the Provincial Council: Srs. Sally, Susan and Ann, who kindly helped me with my bags, waited for me for lunch and took me to the Mother House!

The Sisters were already waiting for me and I was surprised by a warm welcome from all of them and the staff. They were all very attentive and my heart was happy and at peace because I

was “at home”!

And I was also surprised by the large house. The Mother House is huge and beautiful. More than that, it has an important meaning in the life of the Province and is a witness to the many Sisters who lived there, gave their lives, and faithfully carried out the mission. I feel reverence for each one and for the entire history that



was built. I am grateful to all the Sisters who continue this history, being a sign of love, welcome, and unity.

Living together and getting to know one another happened in day-to-day life, in our happy conversations at meals, the sharing experiences of life and mission, in daily Mass and times of celebration, in various afternoon activities, traveling to school and in cultural outings and other times when we were together.

I was privileged because I lived with many Sisters who were teachers, especially Sr. Judith Mulhall and Joan D'Amato, who were with me almost every afternoon teaching me English. I had the opportunity to spend time with the Sisters who do not live at the Mother House and got to know them in some places that helped me to learn about the local culture, such

as Lee, Massachusetts (the Sisters' first mission in the US), Hartford, New York, and nearby cities.

Once a week I volunteered at the House of Bread, a project of the Sisters that has been running for over 40 years. With the help of volunteers, staff, and donations, they care for those living on the streets and immigrants and serve three meals to over 100 people a day and meals for children at a school. The tireless Srs. Maureen Faenza and Theresa Fonti are the foundresses. They are there every day, giving their lives. In the face of many adversities, they have always allowed themselves to be guided by God and by their great love for those who are most in need. The project includes providing housing for families who cannot afford to own a home, welcoming and supporting people who are recovering from drug

addiction, and teaching English to newcomers at Jubilee House with volunteer teachers.

The week I arrived, I began my English studies at Jubilee House. I came across a very striking reality. I heard about the difficulties and challenges of people who have lived in the country for a long time and are studying there. Others who had just arrived like me, were in the process of adapting and learning. I felt a little like them and tried to get as close as I could to understand what it meant to be an immigrant and a foreigner.

This time was precious. I feel happy and grateful for everything I received, for all the learning, for the opportunity to study English, for the time spent with the Sisters. Our bonds as Sisters of Saint Joseph have certainly become stronger!

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