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GENERAL COUNCIL

SUMMARY

THE MISSION OF ST. JOSEPH: THEN AND NOW

Sr. Celine Kalathoor, CSJ

General Council



Each year the church celebrates two feasts of St. Joseph: The solemnity of St. Joseph the husband of Mary, and the feast of Joseph the Worker. Historical knowledge of Joseph is limited. We meet Joseph in the infancy

narratives of Mathew and Luke. According to the Gospel accounts Joseph was a carpenter by profession and a descendant of King David. Joseph is known as a silent, humble, and just man. He had plans and dreams about his marriage,

GENERAL COUNCIL

The Mission of St. Joseph: Then and Now

COVER

JPIC

Italy: Ambassadors of hope against trafficking that annihilates dignity

3

Brazil: Transformative actions in Cristianapolis

5

IFC

Denmark: The Danish Region Collaborates with a Cooperative Bank

7

ICC

ICC: Navigating Social Media with Authenticity and Responsibility

9

New Saints

10

PROVINCE/REGION/MISSION

Brazil: General Data Protection Law

11

Tanmaya: A step towards social responsibility

13

Bolivia: With Trinitarian Dynamism: VIII Latin American Seminar of the St. Joseph Family

15



family, and life. A terrible crisis shatters his life plans when he realizes that Mary, his betrothed, is pregnant. He is faced with a great challenge and dilemma. God intervenes in a dream and asks Joseph to change his plans and dreams about life and to accept Mary as his wife. He accepted Mary, remained committed and faithful to her, and raised her son as his own.

Joseph faced another moment of crisis when God told him: "Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt" (Mt 2,13) One could imagine the anxiety, fear, uncertainty, and insecurity he felt as he left the comforts of his home, trade, familiar

places, and people as he traveled to an unknown land and future. Jesus knew about this piece of his life story from his parents. Later Jesus echoed this experience as; "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head" (Lk 9,58).

Today there are millions of displaced persons and families like the family of St. Joseph, who live in poverty, fear, unemployment, hunger, sickness, uncertainty, and have no place to lay their head. As Sisters of St. Joseph we are called, "to work for the integral development of every person in order that each

may realize his or her dignity as a person beloved by God." (Constitutions: p. 6)

In welcoming and helping the displaced and less privileged persons of our neighborhood and society, treating them with respect, and assisting them to face the future with hope and dignity, we welcome God. "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome ... in truth, I tell you, in so far you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." (Mt 25,35-40)

In the Primitive Constitutions Fr. Medaille writes, "It will be called the Congregation of St. Joseph, a cherished name which will remind the sisters to assist and serve their dear neighbor with the same care, attention, love and cordiality that the glorious St. Joseph showed to the holy Virgin, his most pure spouse and his foster-son, Jesus Christ." May St. Joseph assist us as we continue to read the signs and needs of our time, to embrace and serve our dear neighbors who are most vulnerable with compassion, simplicity and sincere love.

AMBASSADORS OF HOPE AGAINST TRAFFICKING THAT ANNIHILATES DIGNITY

Sr. Veronica Shiju Poopana, CSJ

Italy



Reflecting the theme of the Jubilee year, “Ambassadors of hope together against human trafficking” is the theme of the XI World day of prayer and reflection against human trafficking, celebrated on February 8, the memorial of St. Josephine Bakhita. She was a Sudanese religious who was a victim of this vile phenomenon and a symbol of the Church’s commitment to this issue.

The International Union of Superiors General (women’s congregations), the Union

of Superiors General (men’s congregations) and Talitha Kum, the international anti-trafficking network with more than six thousand sisters and partners worldwide, were entrusted by Pope Francis in 2015 with promoting this day.

According to the United Nations It is currently estimated that 50 million persons are caught up in human trafficking worldwide. One in three victims is a child, while 79% of those exploited sexually are women and girls. Wars, conflicts, violence, poverty

and climate catastrophes increase vulnerability, even though this phenomenon is rampant online.

“To maintain hope in the face of exploitation and injustice is a challenge, but we must persevere with determination to build a world of peace, justice and dignity for all,” says Sister Abby Avelino, a Maryknoll sister and coordinator of Talitha Kum.

During the week of the commemoration there were many activities in the communities of our provinces, regions



and missions, as well as in parishes and different national groups to provide opportunities for reflection and sharing.

In the Pope's message for the XI world day of prayer and reflection against human trafficking there are some important questions which require a response. Pope Francis writes of this as "a complex phenomenon, continually evolving, which feeds on war, conflict, famine and the

consequences of climate change." And so we ask ourselves "How can we nurture hope in the face of millions of persons, mostly women and children, youth, migrants and refugees, caught up in this modern slavery?" Where can we find new momentum "to stand against the trafficking in human organs and tissues, the sexual exploitation of children both male and female, forced labor, including prostitution

and traffic in drugs and weapons?" "How can we acknowledge all this in our world and not lose hope?"

The Pope's appeal in the fight against this phenomenon which requires a global response and a common effort, is that governments and organizations be engaged in initiatives to promote human dignity, to eliminate human trafficking in all its forms and to foster peace in the world.

TRANSFORMATIVE ACTIONS IN CRISTIANAPOLIS

Sr. Joilma Maurina de Jesus Matos, CSJ



Brazil

Cristinápolis is a municipality with around 18,000 inhabitants in the state of Sergipe. The BR 101 highway, which connects the country from north to south, passes through the

municipality, facilitating the sale of smuggled goods, drug trafficking, and prostitution, among other social problems. Its population lives in poverty. Due to the single crop focus on oranges, most people don't have a piece of land

to cultivate and guarantee their family's livelihood, nor are there any other employment alternatives in the municipality, apart from the town hall. Faced with these circumstances, many people are forced to work in the orange harvest, a large proportion of whom do so illegally. These workers face inhumane conditions, dealing with an excessive workload and the risk of accidents, without being paid an adequate wage, nor having the right to vacation, among other issues. Given the temporary nature of this work, which intensifies during the harvest season, many men leave the rural area and look for alternatives to survive in other parts





provide conditions that meet immediate needs, and promote the universalization of social rights.

Projeto Despertar (Project Awakening) is a recognized entity whose purpose is to develop actions for the human promotion, welfare, and social transformation of children and adolescents. It aims to provide adequate means and care to enable them to grow intellectually, humanly, and religiously, helping

of Brazil, often in the South and Southeast. As a result, they are regularly on the road, mostly to harvest oranges or cut sugar cane. Some manage to send small amounts of money home, others form new “families” at their destination and don’t return, while still others come back sick. In the majority of cases, it is the women who take the role of head of the household alone, with the responsibility of raising the children without the support of family, let alone partners, or husbands, and this for various reasons: such as paternal neglect, abandonment of the home, illness, drug addiction, death,

imprisonment, etc. In this situation of helplessness, the impoverished population is left on the margins of society, especially the women, children, and youth. Thus they are exposed to various forms of risk and vulnerability, such as hunger, drugs, prostitution, crime, and a lack of opportunity.

To help these families, the “Project Awakening” was created, and run by the Sisters of St. Joseph Chambéry, working with groups of children, young people, and adult women, currently reaching 160 beneficiaries. This project aims to combat socio-territorial inequalities,

them to become more integrated into society. The project also serves women through workshops in handicrafts, dressmaking, and cooking, among others. It offers favorable means for discovering or improving practical skills, promoting income generation, developing autonomy, as well as providing social inclusion.

These initiatives aim to overcome poverty by ensuring that the population has access to basic needs. When these needs are not met, the people face a threat to both their individual and collective future.

THE DANISH REGION COLLABORATES WITH A COOPERATIVE BANK

Sr. Marianne Bode, CSJ

Denmark



Being part of a “Money Machine” is not a good description for Sisters of Saint Joseph. Nevertheless, for over 30 years, the Danish Region has owned parts of a sustainable bank founded in Denmark.

In 1994, some people in Denmark envisioned using the money allocated in a bank for purposes beyond augmenting the assets of the bank and its shareholders. Their idea was to use the money to provide microloans to areas in Africa and Asia to help people become self-sufficient. This bank is special in the sense that it is a cooperative bank, where clients themselves own the bank. Regardless of the amount of money put in the bank, each client only

owns one part and as such has one vote. One of the founders of Oikos Banken, this cooperative bank, was Fr. Anton Dekkers, SJ, who ministered in Denmark.

He was familiar with cooperative banking from the Netherlands, his home country. The Provincial Superior of the Danish Province, S. Regina König,





and her Council made the decision in 1994 to be part of this bank, thereby providing help for people in need.

The Danish Province also took part in the German parallel organization to Oikos Banken, Oiko Credit. As in Denmark, the Province's investments in Oiko Credit helped people in need. When the time came and no more sisters directly were ministering in Germany, the Danish Province took back the investment in Oiko Credit bank and gave it to the Oikos Banken. By then, the bank joined with another cooperative bank in Denmark, Faster Andelsbanken. The name of the new bank is FasterOikos Andelsbanken and has the same vision to support those

in need.

Prior to 2017, Oikos Banken tried to live out a new vision for the bank. It had become much more difficult to distribute microloans in developing countries. Two women, Marie Olafsdottir and Gitte Kurdahl, founded an association to support refugees entering Denmark seeking asylum with the hope to establish a business in Denmark. If these refugees could fulfill requirements, Oikos Banken accepted them as customers. These refugees could then open businesses related to hairdressing, bike sales and repair, restaurants etc., providing them their living and supporting their families. During the years over 100 small businesses opened.

Money the Sisters of Saint Joseph put into the Oikos Bank, now FasterOikos Andelsbanken, supported the immigrants in a similar way and helped them to adjust in their new country.

The homepage of the FasterOikos Andelsbanken website speaks of their commitment: *We are part of the history of community and solidarity, and that history lives on today as we continue to work to support our customers and local communities. Why choose FasterOikos?*

By choosing FasterOikos, you support not only your own financial future, but also the wider vision of a stronger, fairer and more sustainable local community. This is largely done through support for local associations and initiatives. At the same time, part of our profits is reinvested in organizations that fight for our special causes, which include fighting poverty and promoting financial inclusion - both in Denmark and in developing countries.

As Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Region of Denmark, we are grateful to continue the work good people started more than 30 years ago. It is obvious that more and more dedicated citizens want to support and develop this idea of sharing resources.

NAVIGATING SOCIAL MEDIA WITH AUTHENTICITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Sr. Eliana Aparecida dos Santos, CSJ & Sr. Laveena D’Souza, CSJ



ICC

In today’s digital era, maintaining authenticity online is crucial, especially for those in religious life. Sr. Dolores Lahr, our Superior General, has consistently emphasized the importance of aligning our online presence with our vocation. She has cautioned against using selfies or images that may not reflect the consecrated life. This concern led to a presentation at the Extended Council, which was well received by our Congregation’s leaders. The key issues such as social media, fake news, Artificial Intelligence, and recognizing their growing impact on our lives were further explored by Srs. Eliana and Laveena.

Social media is a powerful tool for sharing content and fostering connections. However, it also presents challenges,

particularly for consecrated religious. Canon Law 666 advises discretion in media usage, urging us to avoid anything that could harm our vocation. The Church has long acknowledged the influence of media, calling for ethical and responsible digital engagement since the Second

Vatican Council in 1963.

A significant challenge in today’s digital world is the generational gap between “digital natives” (born after 1980) and “digital immigrants” (born before 1980). Digital natives are naturally comfortable with technology, while digital immigrants must



learn to adapt. As younger generations continue to join religious communities, integrating these perspectives in formation is essential. Embracing digital culture thoughtfully fosters a balanced and connected community life.

The Church's communication model, based on Creation, Revelation, Incarnation, and Evangelization, provides a framework for social media use. Just as God communicates in various ways, we too are called to share the Good News through digital platforms. However, social media should not merely document our daily lives; it should inspire deeper reflections and invite others into meaningful spiritual experiences.

Every online user,

regardless of their audience size, holds influence. Whether through sharing spiritual insights or offering online counseling, we must ensure our interactions promote Christian values. Authenticity, kindness, and integrity should guide our digital presence, helping us build a positive and uplifting online community. Misinformation is widespread in the digital world. Fake news, often sensationalized, spreads quickly and can mislead individuals. The Church's Communication Commission has developed resources to help identify and combat false information. Practicing media mindfulness—verifying sources, questioning headlines, and thinking critically—is essential for responsible digital engagement.

Avoiding overly personal or controversial content helps maintain an online presence that reflects humility, respect, and love. While digital platforms facilitate communication, they should not replace real-life interactions. Prioritizing hospitality and solidarity ensure a balance between our online and offline lives.

As we continue engaging with the digital world, it is essential to use social media as a means of evangelization. By integrating faith and technology, we can authentically share God's love and truth. Thoughtful and responsible digital engagement allows us to remain true to our calling while positively influencing others in both online and offline spaces.

NEW SAINTS

Sr. Alice Maria Mocelin	99	Brazil	15.12.2024
Sr. Anne Chatel	99	France	30.12.2024
Sr. Iraci de Fatima Cirino Dos Santos	66	Brazil	09.01.2025
Sr. Santinha de São José	89	Brazil	09.01.2025
Sr. Genevieve Barneron	88	France	16.01.2025
Sr. Christofer Whelan	92	Pachmarhi	23.01.2025
Sr. Michaela Cressend	98	France	07.02.2025
Sr. Loretta George Katiharán	93	Nirmala	22.02.2025
Sr. Rosengela	92	Italy	24.02.2025
Sr. Dilma Judith	90	Brazil	28.02.2025

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION LAW

Yoshie Roberta Boyd Yoshikawa & Josélio Jorge Teider

Brazil



The Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry in Brazil live in an increasingly connected and digital society, in which personal data such as name, address, and health information, among others, are collected daily by various organizations and companies. In the past, the way this data was used didn't always take people's well-being into account. Often, the information was manipulated for commercial purposes or, in more serious situations, fell into the hands of malicious people who used it for fraud, scams, and other crimes.

Faced with this reality, a global movement has emerged to ensure that people's rights are preserved, even in the

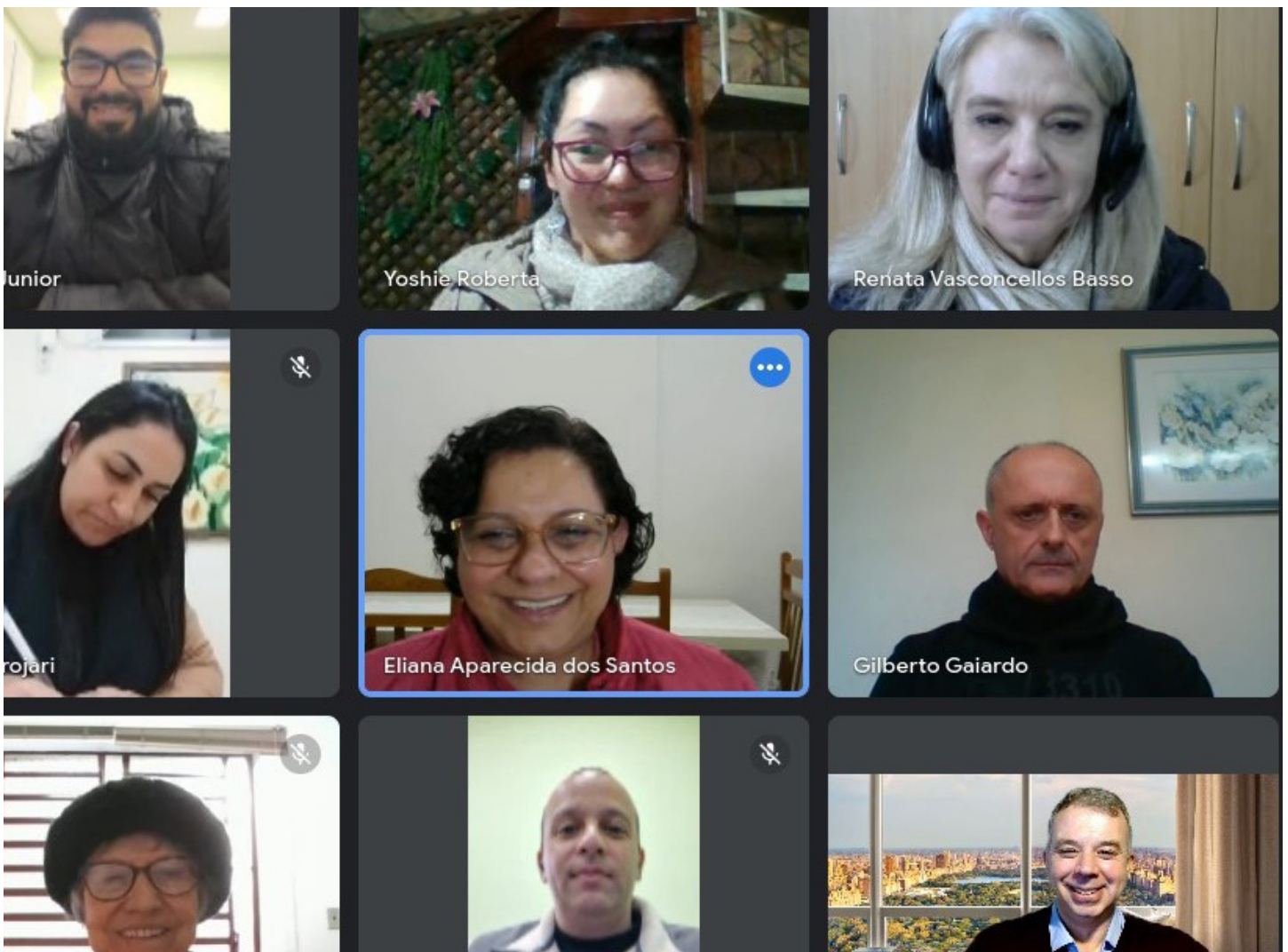
digital environment. A number of personal data protection laws have been created in various countries, such as the General Data Protection Regulation in Europe, with the aim of protecting people from abuses in the use of their data. In Brazil, this concern resulted in the creation of the General Personal Data Protection Law published in 2018.

The General Data Protection Law regulates the processing of personal data in Brazil, establishing rules on how personal information can be collected, stored, and used. It aims to guarantee transparency and security in using this data, preventing all misuse. To this end, the law gives subjects data rights, such as the right to know what

data is being collected, the right to request its deletion or correction, and the right to consent or not to use their information.

The mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry has always been to care for God's people, and to seek the protection and well-being of all. In their work in areas such as healthcare, education, social assistance, hospitality, and in religious and pastoral work, they handle a lot of personal data, from patient health information to student and employee records. This data is needed for them to fulfill their mission, but it is essential that it is used securely and responsibly.

Aware of this responsibility, the Sisters have



Some members of the data protection committee of the Brazilian Province

started a program to bring their activities into line with the data protection law. This plan involves all sectors of the Province, without exception. They are committed to ensuring that everyone, in their schools, health units, religious, pastoral, and welfare works, comply with this law. This includes reviewing how they collect, store, and use personal data, as well as training their employees to understand the importance of this protection.

Compliance with the

data protection law follows a comprehensive plan, which includes training and awareness, data mapping, security and control, and support for data subjects. All employees, from managers to those who are directly in contact with the people they serve, are being trained in the importance of protecting personal data and the practices they need to follow daily. Procedures have also been implemented to ensure that anyone whose data is recorded can exercise the

rights guaranteed by the law, such as the right to access, correct, or delete their data.

The implementation of the data protection law is not only a legal requirement, but also a reflection of the commitment of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry to the care and dignity of every person who is part of their ministry. They will continue to work with zeal and dedication, ensuring that their ethical principles and mission go hand in hand with the protection and respect of personal data.

A STEP TOWARDS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Sr. Nidhi Perumpilly, CSJ

Tanmaya/India



Ratlam is a small city in Central India, where the divide between the rich and the poor is clearly visible. It has a significant number of people who rely on daily wages for survival. Every morning the city square

becomes a gathering point for day laborers seeking work. It is at this square that the students of St. Joseph's Convent School, Ratlam, took part in the 'WE CARE' drive, a community outreach program aimed at fostering empathy,

generosity, and social responsibility.

During the second, third and fourth weeks of January, around 1100 students and 30 teachers enthusiastically participated in the drive. The primary



A student offering shawl to an elderly lady

objective of the 'WE CARE' initiative with its vivid themes was to raise awareness among students about the importance of sharing and caring, especially for those in need.

As part of the theme "Each One Feed One," each student brought an extra lunchbox to share, symbolizing their commitment to make a difference, no matter how small. Along with the food, students also carried blankets and warm clothing to distribute to the poor and needy at the city square and among pavement dwellers.

Mrs. Rachana Vyas, one of the teachers who accompanied the students during the drive, shared her thoughts with these words: "It was a joyous moment for

the students to hand out lunchboxes and offer warm clothing. The smiles and gratitude of those laborers were priceless. It was a simple yet meaningful act of kindness, and the students were thrilled to make a difference in someone's day."

In addition to distributing food and clothing, the students were educated about the importance of not wasting food and other resources, using resources sparingly, and being mindful of their impact on the environment and society. These lessons, combined with the hands-on experience of helping others, equipped the students with valuable life skills and nurtured a sense of responsibility toward their community. On the

other hand, for the simple laborers, it was more than just receiving food or clothes. It was a reminder that they are not forgotten but cared for.

Though small in scale, the drive brought the community closer together, reinforcing the values of compassion and solidarity. It carried a powerful message about the importance of caring for others and fostered a sense of collective responsibility. This drive represents a step forward in building a generation that understands the importance of sharing and caring. It was a wonderful opportunity for students to step out of their classrooms and make a positive impact on the lives of those less fortunate in their community.



Students handing over food packets to pavement dwellers

WITH TRINITARIAN DYNAMISM: VIII LATIN AMERICAN SEMINAR OF THE ST. JOSEPH FAMILY

Sr. Francisca Dias de Medeiros, CSJ



Bolivia

At the beginning of January 2025, Cochabamba, Bolivia, hosted the VIII Seminar of the St. Joseph Family in Latin America and the Caribbean. The event brought together 35 lay people and 47 sisters from 11 St. Joseph congregations, representing countries such as Canada, France, Argentina, Brazil, the United States, and Puerto Rico. The central theme “With Trinitarian Dynamism:

Being Prophetic Mystics in a Synodal Key” guided the debates and reflections throughout the meeting.

More than a space for learning, the seminar was a profound experience of communion and mission. With the contribution of experts from various fields, the participants were challenged to look at the current reality with renewed commitment. Journalist Elton Bozzetto reflected on

climate change and the need for a concrete commitment to caring for our “common home”, reinforcing the urgency of integrating socio-environmental justice into the Church's mission. Sociologist Juan Carlos Núñez Vidaurre analyzed the challenges of the economic situation in Latin America and the Caribbean, highlighting the inequalities and difficulties faced by the most vulnerable populations.

Sr. Mary McGlone, CSJ, spoke about prophetic mysticism based on Trinitarian spirituality, reminding us that “every member of the St. Joseph Family must act in the world inspired by Trinitarian love because through it everything was created. Everything that exists participates in Trinitarian life”. Érika Aldunate deepened the reflection on Synodality, highlighting it as a path of spiritual renewal and





structural reform in the Church, emphasizing the need to walk together, men and women, in the process of listening, participation, and mission.

In addition to the formative moments, the seminar was a privileged space for sharing experiences of the Charism of Communion in mission. The memory

of the first Sisters and the founder, Jean Pierre Médaille, was present in the spirituality that permeated the meetings, strengthening the identity of the Family of St. Joseph. The meeting reinforced the importance of continuing to deepen the experience of prophetic mysticism, committing ourselves to social transformation, and

building a Church that is ever more Synodal and attentive to the realities of our time. The experience of the 8th Latin American Seminar of the St. Joseph Family was undoubtedly a time of grace, renewal, and commitment. May the fruits of this meeting continue to enlighten our actions and strengthen our mission in the world.

EDITING

Sr. Barbara Bozak
Sr. Eliana Aparecida dos Santos
Sr. Leni Menegat

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Sr. Laveena D'Souza

TRANSLATIONS

Anette Jensen
Sr. Cristina Gavazzi
Sr. Margherita Corsino
Sr. Maria Elisabete Reis
Sr. Marie-Josophe Chorot
Sr. Preeti Hulas
Sr. Ivani Maria Gandini

CIRCULATION

Monica Bianchini
www.csjchambery.org

E - MAIL

icc@csjchambery.org