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FEWER IN NUMBER, MORE HEART

Sr. Maria Cristina Gavazzi, CSJ

General Council

"Wake up the world" and "return to the heart": two powerful images that Leo XIV delivered to women and men religious during the Jubilee of Consecrated Life and that today resonate as a program for life.

For Sister Simona Brambilla, prefect of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, consecrated life is a call to safeguard hope, cultivate synodality and renew charisms. The most eloquent sign that consecrated life can offer the world is to "wake up the world". The verb "wake up" recalls the attitude of the one who helps others regain their senses; it is an expression of care, of the one

S. Rosane Steffenon greets Pope Leo

who works so that human senses open up, reactivate themselves, free themselves from what can shut them down or numb them.

"Return to the heart" is the place to rediscover the spark that animated the beginning of a congregation's history, with a specific mission that does not end and that is entrusted to us today. A sign that consecrated life is called to offer is that of profound attention, active and humble listening that knows how to hear the whisper; that knows how to grasp the deepest desires that are in a person's heart and offer a safe space so that all this can be articulated and expressed.

In his homily during the Mass for the Jubilee of Consecrated Life, Pope Leo also gave us the image of the tree which fills the world with oxygen. It is important that in consecrated life spaces and paths are created to cultivate both the roots and the shoots of the tree. All this can help to identify and care for the roots so they will go ever deeper in the healthy earth of the charism and, because of this, be able to sustain the tree today, permitting it to be nourished, to interact with the environment and to give life to new shoots that spread oxygen.

Pope Leo also asked women and men religious to not forget synodality. Synodality is, in fact, a way of being Church that is felt in the heart and the spirit and that overflows in gestures, words, thoughts, and the way one relates to others and to the world. Synodal conversion begins with listening, with knowing that the other has much to teach me and that the Spirit can speak though anyone. Consecrated life possesses a rich tradition of synodality, found in its very DNA. Today it is indispensable to to rediscover it, letting ourselves be contaminated by the Gospel and vaccinated against all rigidity, arrogance or abuse of the dignity of any creature.

Pope Leo, taking up the words of Pope Francis, encouraged us to not base our hope on numbers or works but on the One in whom we have placed our trust and for whom "nothing is impossible". A present and future challenge is to see smallness, diminishment, fragility in a spirit of wisdom. The conversion of heart to smallness, read as a blessing, can liberate consecrated life from a worldly logic, making it a prophetic presence, capable of recognizing with emotion the humble and regal power of God's Love that is manifest in poor, fragile signs, like a baby in the arms of its mother, like a grain of wheat that dies to bear fruit, like bread broken for the life of all.

COP 30 – "THE PEOPLE'S COP"

Sr. Barbara Bozak, CSJ

USA

COP 30, the UN meeting on Climate Change, which addressed the challenges and needed responses to this environmental crisis, took place November 10-21, 2025, in Belém, Brazil. It was significant that Brazil, with its COP 30 presidency, chose to have this international event in Belém, a city in the north of Brazil situated at the mouth of the Amazon River and the edge of the Amazon rainforest. President Lula saw this as an opportunity to showcase the importance of the Amazon basin and to bring its challenges to the heart of the discussions. The 60,000 official delegates were joined by nearly 45,000 others who, while not able to access the Blue Zone where official discussions were taking place, participated in the Cupula dos Povos (People's Summit) and other parallel events. This was part of President Lula's desire to make COP 30 the "People's COP".

In fact the presence of the Movement of the Landless and many Indigenous groups was remarkable. People came from all over the world, all five continents, to lift their voices at the People's Summit and COP 30. The Sisters of St. Joseph were represented by a 13 member delegation, both lay and religious, coming from Brazil, Canada and the US.

We participated in the People's Summit, attending sessions on Just Transition and the role of women, among others, engaged with an ecumenical community in events sponsored by Tapiri and joined other events sponsored by the church and church organizations. One powerful moment was the public march on Saturday morning when we joined with more than 70,000 individuals to walk together through the city, raising our voices to protect the environment, eliminate fossil fuels, listen to the cries of the indigenous and protect human rights defenders whose lives are often threatened.

Many were disappointed in the outcome of COP 30, including the fact that the term "fossil fuels" was removed from the final text, due in part to the presence of petroleum interests, both countries and corporations. The

Genevieve (Canadian), S. Joilma, Arzila, Regina Celia, Simone and Barbara preparing for the march in Belém

fact that the United States did not send a delegation to the meeting was more positive than negative, since the US frequently blocks any forward movement by supporting big business and other interests that have no concern for the environment and human rights.

Among the notably positive aspects of COP 30 was the strong visible presence of many indigenous groups from Brazil and beyond. In the Green Zone the indigenous were everywhere, showcasing their culture and giving voice to their concerns. Although 360 indigenous had been given admission to the Blue Zone and were able to engage with the decision-makers, they did not have a voice in the official negotiations. Yet their presence was important. One of the notable positive outcomes was that by the end of COP 30 Brazil gave official recognition to 15 indigenous territories. Undoubtedly their strong presence influenced this recognition.

What was very clear, from the perspective of one who was on the periphery of the official meetings, was the power of the people to make inroads and bring about change from the ground up. If the international organizations and national governments cannot find the way forward to address Climate Change, the destruction of the environment and biodiversity, ordinary people, working together can have an impact. This was one of the great reminders of COP 30.

SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH AT COP 30: UNITING VOICES IN DEFENSE OF LIFE AND OUR COMMON HOME

Sr. Eliana Aparecida dos Santos, CSJ

Brazil

From November 11 to 21, 2025, Belém. Pará, hosted COP 30, bringing together leaders, social movements, and organizations from around the world to confront the urgency of the climate crisis. Climate change was already causing extreme droughts, floods, and heat waves that affected vulnerable populations in unequal ways – such as Indigenous peoples, traditional communities, and residents of urban peripheries – among many other extreme climate events. At this global event, the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry was present with a group of Sisters, lay members of the St. Joseph Network of Latin America and the Caribbean, laywomen of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada, Sisters of the Italian Institute of St. Joseph, Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester, members of the JPIC Commission, the Provincial Council, and Sr. Barbara Bozak, representative of the Congregations of St. Joseph at the United Nations.

The group participated actively in the People's Summit, an event parallel to COP 30, organized by more than 1,000 social and grassroots movements from around the world. The Summit provided an autonomous and inclusive space to debate real solutions to the environmental crisis, grounded in the experiences of those who directly live with the impacts of floods, droughts, deforestation, and territorial violations. Held from November 12 to 16 at the Federal University of Pará, the event brought together thousands of people in an atmosphere of intense exchange of knowledge and resistance. Although the university offered a large space, the organization faced

S. Eliana, Arzila, Simone, Regina Celia, Joana, Joilma and Aline at the People's Summit

challenges related to food, water, and the distribution of venues. Even so, the collective energy and cultural diversity made the gathering a major milestone of global mobilization. The Sisters of St. Joseph took part in reflections on the rights of women, Indigenous peoples, the peoples of the Amazon, sustainable energy, and a just energy transition, among other topics, strengthening the Congregation's commitment to climate justice and the care of our Common Home.

At the conclusion of the Summit, the People's Summit Declaration was released and presented to the authorities of COP 30. This document, the result of collective contributions from movements and organizations worldwide, denounces economic models that prioritize profit over life, highlights the critical situation of the peoples most affected by the crisis, and advocates for popular participation, protection of territories, food sovereignty, a just energy transition, and accountability of large corporations and polluting countries. It also reaffirms that only unity and the organization of peoples will make it possible to confront the root causes of the climate crisis and build a sustainable future.

During the remaining days of COP 30, the group of Sisters and lay participants followed events and discussions held in the Green Zone, a space open to the general public.

ECONOMIC PROCEDURES MANUAL: A COMMITMENT TO MISSION-DRIVEN STEWARDSHIP

Sr. Laveena D'Souza, CSJ

IFC

Religious life is not only a spiritual vocation—it also carries an economic responsibility. Every congregation, regardless of geographical context, recognizes the vital role of both human and material resources in sustaining its mission. Effective stewardship of these resources reflects a congregation's dedication to its mission, its community, and the Church.

With this in mind, the International Finance Commission of our congregation has spent the past two years developing a comprehensive reflection on economic stewardship. Guided by Sr. Mariaelena, former General Treasurer, and Sr. Maria Cristina, General Councilor and finance liaison, the commission—comprising Sr. Barbara Mullen (USA), Sr. Apolonia and Sr. Neuza (Brazil), Sr. Marianne (Denmark), Sr. Shilpa and Sr. Snehal (India)—has shaped the Economic Procedures Manual (EPM). This manual serves as a call to responsible and mission-aligned management of temporal goods.

The EPM is structured into three main sections: Part I deals with administration of temporal goods; part II highlights financial personnel and structures; and part III throws light on management of patrimony in accordance with Canon Law.

The first part outlines how the congregation manages its resources in alignment with its mission and charism. It emphasizes discernment, strategic planning, and the sustainability of ministries, ensuring they remain faithful to Gospel values and to the charism of the congregation. It also underscores the importance of internal controls, collaboration with qualified external professionals, and financial education for all members, fostering shared responsibility across the congregation. The second part gives in detail the roles and responsibilities of individuals and organizational

structures involved in financial administration at various levels. The third part addresses administration of patrimony, ensuring that all practices are consistent with canonical norms and the congregation's values.

The EPM affirms that economic decisions are never neutral. They can either foster relationships grounded in justice and solidarity or contribute to exclusion and indifference. A people-centered approach to economy is essential—one that honors the dignity of every member, especially the vulnerable and elderly, and prioritizes service over mere efficiency.

The EPM stresses that financial responsibility is not confined to treasurers or leadership councils. All members are called to understand the economic and financial aspects of the Congregation's life. Training, especially for newer members, promotes "the human face of the economy" by encouraging simplicity, gratitude, concern for the poor, and care for creation, as Pope Francis emphasizes in Laudato Si'.

Ultimately, the Congregation views its economic life as part of its mission. As Pope Francis reminds us, when we care for the goods entrusted to us and then share it so there is no one left in need, we contribute to building a more just and hopeful world.

New Saints

Sr. Joan Francis Mooney	91	USA	06.11.2025
Sr. Maria Benigna	89	Brazil	15.11.2025
Sr. Ida Amelia Comin	97	Brazil	07.12.2025

VOICES OF THE AMAZON AT THE PEOPLE'S SUMMIT: A TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE

Sr. Joana Mendes, ISJ

Rochester Congregation, Brazil

Recently, I had the privilege of participating in the People's Summit Toward COP 30, a parallel event, and for some of the days during COP 30 itself, in Belém, Pará, an important space for resistance and proposals It was a truly rich and inspiring experience, and a powerful reminder that real solutions to the climate crisis cannot exist without the participation of Indigenous and peoples who live on the river or at its edge and are on the front lines of its impacts. All of creation suffers direct consequences, but those most severely affected are the populations living in Amazonian communities, especially those who depend on extractivism for their livelihood.

During the event, I took part in several activities focused on the energy transition and its direct impacts on territories and ways of life, with particular emphasis on Indigenous and river communities. The discussions highlighted the urgent need for a just transition—one that respects territorial rights and includes the ancestral wisdom of these peoples, rather than imposing "false solutions" that often generate further conflicts and inequalities.

One space for deep reflection was the Ecumenical and Interreligious Tapiri, where the themes discussed resonated strongly with the concept of Care for Our Common Home, so emphasized by Pope Francis. There, we witnessed spirituality and faith joining the struggle for climate justice and democracy, underscoring that the environmental crisis is, above all, an ethical and spiritual crisis that calls for a radical change in mindset and action. Although the discussions were rich, I felt that we from religious circles scattered our activities too widely in spaces far from the area organized by the People's Summit. Perhaps our struggles would have been strengthened by greater unity. I often feel that we are speaking only among ourselves.

The discussions at the Summit also gave great visibility to agroecological initiatives as real and sustainable paths for food production and environmental conservation. These practices show that it is possible to reconcile production with regeneration of ecosystems and sustainability, valuing the knowledge of small farmers and traditional peoples.

S. Nilva, Regina Celia, Joana, Eliana, Simone, Arzila, Joilma with 2 indigenous at Tapiri

It was a great honor for me to participate as a Sister of St. Joseph of Rochester, together with eight other Sisters and lay members of the St. Joseph Family.

The high point in Belém came on November 16, during a closing political ceremony, when I had the opportunity to participate in the delivery of two crucial documents – the Final Document of the People's Summit and the Letter from the "Children and Adolescents of the Children's Summit" – to authorities of the Brazilian Government and representatives of the COP 30 delegation. These documents synthesize the collective demands and proposals of social movements, calling for popular and sovereign participation of peoples in decisions concerning the climate.

The People's Summit once again demonstrated that it is not possible to confront the climate crisis without confronting inequality. I leave Belém with the certainty that the unity of social movements, churches, and traditional peoples – in defense of the demarcation of Indigenous lands, the preservation of our "Common Home," and respect for territories – is the key to building a sustainable and just future. We must continue to struggle and to strengthen our struggles.

WHAT HOPES AND CHALLENGES DID THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH TAKE FROM COP 30?

Sr. Eliana Aparecida dos Santos, CSJ

Brazil

The participation of the Sisters of St. Joseph at COP 30 was marked by powerful experiences of hope, commitment, and deep listening to the peoples from the Amazon and from various parts of the world.

For Sister Eliana Aparecida dos Santos (Chambéry), being at the event meant experiencing the beauty of human and cultural diversity united by care for life and the forest. She emphasizes that we are

part of nature – land, water, and environment – and that everything is interconnected, reinforcing the importance of protecting what we ourselves are.

Sister Joilma Jesus de Matos (Chambéry – JPIC) highlights the strength of the struggles and demands of peoples, movements, and pastoral groups, affirming that the commitment of the Sisters of St. Joseph is to promote Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation, building unity in diversity and encouraging care for our common home together with laypeople and communities.

Sister Simone Xavier (Institute), who lives in a region marked by the exploitation of timber and gold, says that her reality echoes at COP, where she witnessed the leadership of young people and women. She criticizes the wall that separates Indigenous peoples from global leaders, symbolizing a COP 30 full of hope, but also of pain and injustices.

Sister Joana Mendes (Rochester) recalls with emotion the march and the delivery of the final document to the authorities, especially because of the participation of children and adolescents.

Regina Célia List (Chambéry) reinforces that listening to Indigenous peoples is essential, as they are the ones who face the hardships of life in Amazonian communities. She reminds us that the survival of these populations depends on rivers, forests, and all biodiversity, and that their way of life is guided by deep respect for nature.

The CSJ delegation in Belém: Genevieve (Canadian), S. Arzila, Sasquia (Canadian), S. Nilva, Barbara, Regina Celia, Joana, Joilma, Simone and Eliana

Sister Nilva Dal Bello (Chambéry – CSJ Latin America Network) celebrates the gathering of so many people committed to caring for life and considers this a historic moment, capable of inspiring a legacy for future generations. For her, the participation of the Sisters of St. Joseph strengthens the mission of protecting life and our common home.

Sister Aline Tessaro (Chambéry) emphasized that it was an inspiring experience for us, Sisters of St. Joseph, to witness women's leadership in the struggle for climate justice. The speeches of ministers and leaders reinforced the leading role of women in society and culture. The phrase "women support women" deeply marked this gathering.

Sister Bárbara Bozak (Chambéry – UN) highlights the importance of listening directly to communities affected by the climate crisis, so that their voices can be brought to spaces of global decision-making.

Finally, Sister Ana Amélia Miranda (Chambéry) speaks of the responsibility to protect natural resources, especially drinking water, that her community in Marituba shares with neighboring families, advocating for public policies that ensure the preservation of nature and goods essential to life.

All these voices reveal a deep commitment to socio-environmental justice, the defense of the peoples of the Amazon, the protection of the planet, and the creation of a sustainable, just, and integrated future for all forms of life.

A FLORAL ART WORKSHOP : SEEDS OF PEACE AND HOPE

Sr. Jona Chinnappan, CSJ

France

From September 5 to 13, 2025, the province of France/Belgium of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry had the joy of welcoming to Bois Joli a workshop on floral art with the theme "Seeds of Peace and Hope," a theme chosen to echo the 10th World Day of Prayer to protect creation. This workshop, organized as part of the Month of Creation, brought together thirteen participants coming from different parts of Europe to share a time of creation, contemplation and communion.

The Floral Art Association, with its 30 years of existence, each year travels to different regions of France. Its members create compositions inspired by the beauty of the place that welcomes them. The ten-day course alternates between three days of floral creation and several days to discover the region, allowing for artistic, human and spiritual immersion.

Throughout the month of September the communities of the Province experienced several spiritual and community moments around the theme of creation. The first week was dedicated to reading and meditating in community on the Message of

In the garden at Bellecombette with the floral creations

Pope Leo XIV for the World Day of Prayer for Creation. During the second week we celebrated a prayer in the garden which included planting a small tree offered by the young people of the parish during the celebration of the perpetual vows of eleven sisters on June 15, 2025. This symbolic action expressed the life that grows in the family of St. Joseph among younger generations. During the third week there was collaboration of the sisters and the participants of the Floral Art workshop at Bois Joli, with the creation of bouquets inspired by nature and by peace – true prayers in flowers – and then the display of 150 bouquets around the house of Bellecombette and Bois Joli. The fourth week we read the Message of the European Catholic Conferences and Councils, followed by a time of reflection and sharing in the communities, according to each one's availability.

To conclude the month we prepared a Mass together with the residents of Clos Saint Joseph, a nursing home, mixing intergenerational sharing, memories and a sense of wonder.

This Floral Art workshop not only beautified the premises; it helped the participants to cultivate bonds with the sisters of the community when they visited the Memory Hall and deepen links between faith, art and integral ecology. By combining creative activities and contemplation, sharing the experiences of the week, the participants rediscovered that to care for creation is also to care for one another. The seeds of peace and hope planted during those days will undoubtedly continue to blossom in the hearts and communities, as a call to live in simplicity, thankfulness and communion.

With St. Ignatius, we sought to find God in all things and in every circumstance of our life.

OUR PILGRIMAGE IN FRANCE – AN INNER JOURNEY

Sr. Selina (Pachmarhi) and Sr. Veena (Tanmaya)

India

As we sit and reflect on the days which we spent in France, in the cradle of our congregation, we know this was a remarkable event in our life. It was indeed a home coming experience of living our spirituality, the charism of communion and interculturality. Some of us were deeply touched by our pioneering sisters whose life was simple, and who went forth with untiring determination and unshakable courage. We were so happy to walk in the streets of Le Puy trod by our founder Fr. Medaille and our pioneering sisters. This experience brought us blessings, the strength and courage to move forward with courage.

In Chambery we experienced the love and care of our sisters. Their radiating joy, availability and companionship was a leaven

of unity to all those whom they encountered. We all left with gratitude for this this pilgrimage, a wonderful, memorable and life giving experience for each one of us.

– *S. Selina*

As I reflected on the missionary zeal, sensitivity, and availability of our co-founders and foundresses during our pilgrimage to France, I was deeply inspired by the call to be a transformative presence, like the seed that generates life in communion, spread across five continents.

In the midst of political unrest and wars, our congregation came into being because of Father Médaille's sensitive and compassionate heart. He listened to the cries of the victims of poverty and the physical and mental suffering caused by war. Many times, the "Little Design" was struck down by the French Revolution and the Law of Secularism. Yet, our congregation stood firm against these heavy storms. The flame of the charism of Cordial Charity, though wounded, found new vigor in the mutilated tree. New communities were reorganized, and hundreds of sisters left France—sailing for months across the oceans—carrying the dream, the mission, and the charism of the Little Design. They launched new forms of action and ministries, strengthening missions in other European countries, Brazil, the United States, India, Africa, and beyond.

The celebration of 375 years, presided over by the Archbishop of France, Mgr Thibault Verny, together with priests, lay associates, laity, and sisters from other congregations, was an amazing and enriching experience. The togetherness and the way we touched people with our presence made it truly memorable. The Province of France enhanced this solemn occasion in an incredible and meaningful way. It is truly an experience to ponder for the rest of our lives.

My sacred visit to France touched me deeply, a story of great love. My stay in France gave me renewed energy and courage to live fully for the congregation for our dear neighbor. The French Province, despite its challenges, continues to keep the flame burning through a transformative and active presence. Like the seed that generates life in communion, they live as one family. Let us keep our hope alive through our fidelity.

- *S. Veena*

Visiting the rooms of Mother St. John Fontbonne in Lyon

70 YEARS STRONG, ONE ACT OF KINDNESS: ST. JOSEPH'S CONVENT SCHOOL'S FIRST BLOOD CAMP

Sr. Nidhi Perumpilly, CSJ

Tanmaya/India

Paving its way toward its Platinum Jubilee, on November 26, St. Joseph's Convent School, Ratlam, Central India, added another meaningful chapter to its year-long celebrations by hosting its first-ever Blood Donation Camp. As one of the ongoing activities marking the 70-year milestone, the initiative—organized in collaboration with Dr. Lakshminarayan Pandey Medical College—stood out as a highlight of the Jubilee year, reflecting the school's enduring commitment to compassion, service, and community.

The camp was supervised by Dean Dr. Anita Mutha, alongside Dr. Prathishta Patidar and Dr. Ritesh Gurjar, Head of the Blood Bank. Social worker Mr. Govind Kakani was recognized for his role in bringing the project to life, while teachers coordinated preparations under the guidance of Ms. Deepti Sharma and Ms. Purnima Gupta.

S. Nidhi (2nd from left) and others at the blood donor venue

The school auditorium was transformed into a vibrant donation hub, complete with registration desks, medical screening areas, and rest zones. The atmosphere was shaped by the presence of Sisters, teachers, parents, alumni, and citizens from across Ratlam—each bringing a spirit of generosity and unity.

A total of 115 individuals, include sisters,

Medical personnel with school staff gathered around a blood donor

teachers and parents, stepped forward, resulting in the collection of 115 units of blood. Donors received a 500 ml steel bottle in appreciation, while the visiting medical team applauded the professional organization and high hygiene standards.

One blood donor spoke of his experience in these words: "After donating blood, I felt as if I had become a source of hope for someone I didn't know. This experience is truly special."

Sister Flora expressed similar sentiments: "I felt grateful that this noble act could help save someone's life. It filled me with deep joy and happiness to know that I could be a part of someone's life in such a meaningful way."

For many first-time donors, the experience was transformative. One woman admitted feeling nervous at first, but later described herself as "the most fortunate person" to participate in the noble cause.

Others captured the moment with humor and pride. One of the parents shared: "Just donated blood—my arm's a bit sore, but I'm feeling like a superhero! Huge thanks to the staff for making it painless."

The School Principal, Sr. Nidhi, expressed heartfelt gratitude to the medical team, volunteers, and the school community, emphasizing that such initiatives would inspire future generations to act with responsibility and kindness.

The Blood Donation Camp not only enriched the school's Platinum Jubilee celebrations but also carried a universal message: meaningful change begins when people choose to care.

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