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GENERAL COUNCIL

“PRESERVING HUMAN FACES AND VOICES” IN COMMUNICATION

Sr. Celine Kalathoor, CSJ

General Council



In the first chapter of Genesis, we encounter a God who initiates the creative process by speaking such powerful words as “Let there be light!” Creation responds appropriately: “and there was light.” The fundamental relationship between God and creation

is one of communication. God speaks and creation responds. When humanity does not listen attentively or respond appropriately to God’s word, it is no longer in right relationship with God. It is our very nature to listen to the word of God and to respond.

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God is communion, sharing himself with us and enabling us to enter into communion with one another. Communication is at the very heart of humanity's relationship with the Creator. It is also essential within the human family if we are to live with one another as brothers and sisters, children of the one and same God. It is one of the most important means of reconciliation and of living in harmony. Dialogue and attentive listening bring us closer to God and to one another and enable us to build right relationships, living in peace and unity with one another and with God.

The CSJ family was founded to bring people into communion with God and with one another. Our charism of communion, by

its very nature, entrusts us with the mission of communication. "Rooted in love for the Mysteries of the Trinity, Incarnation and Eucharist, we have as our purpose to bring about the total union of ourselves and others with God and with one another." (Constitution: p. 3) Communication is one of the essential paths through which we grow into this union.

"God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Gen 1:27) Our likeness to God makes conversation with God possible, while the creation of man and woman places every human person, from the beginning, in a relationship of dialogue with others.

In our AI-driven age,

Pope Leo reminds us to keep the human person at the heart of every communication, because our faces and voices are sacred and unique expressions of God's image and likeness. Our relationship with others constitutes the core of what it means to be human. Nothing can replace the soul of communication or the richness of interaction with real people. Without embracing others, there can be no relationship or friendship. Let us remember that we are called to use our faces and voices, "to proclaim the Gospel, and 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." (Constitution: p. 6)

VILLAGE FOR THE EARTH, THE DREAM THAT SETS THE FUTURE BACK IN MOTION

Sr. Maria Cristina Gavazzi, CSJ

General Council



“**E**nvironmental sustainability and the care of creation are essential commitments for human survival.” With these words Pope Leo XIV reminded us in September 2025 that the environmental crisis is also a spiritual and social issue.

It was in this perspective that Rome welcomed, from April 16 to 19, the eleventh Village for the Earth, the heart of the Italian celebration of the World Earth Day. Promoted by Earth Day Italy and the Focolari movement, the Village organized a program with more than 600 free events and about 250 organizations involved. The



main theme of the 2026 event is found in the slogan “Let’s dream again.” Not an escape from reality but raising awareness. Pierluigi Sassi, president of Earth Day Italy, stressed that the dream is a foundational space to imagine the future, today often suffocated by the logic of productivity. The invitation, addressed above all to young people, is that of recovering the ability to build the future they so desire, avoiding the imposed models and going back to a shared project.

At the heart of the 2026 program there is, thus, the desire to make the new generations protagonists. About 150 youth, coming from different European countries were involved in

the closing of the “Manifesto of dreams,” a document that will gather visions and proposals for the future, to be brought to international settings dedicated to climate. The dreams of young people, in fact, are intertwined with those of previous generations, giving continuity to a process of civil development that cannot be taken for granted. In a context of geopolitical tension and global crises, the Village for the Earth presents itself as a place of cultural and civil resistance. An opportunity to reaffirm that the progress made in the past decades – from international institutions to cooperation among peoples – are not illusions, but a heritage to be safeguarded and revitalized.

With sports, science and culture, with over thirty activities available, the village of biodiversity managed by the Italian Forest Rangers, the avenue of the sciences and the 17 piazzas dedicated to the Objectives of Agenda 2030, the Village for the Earth has emerged as a large educational and participative experience, open to all. “We must pray for the conversion of many persons, within and outside the Church, that do not yet recognize the urgency to care for our common home,” said Pope Leo XIV at the Laudato Si’ Village in Castel Gondolfo. A call that finds concrete expression in the Village for the Earth, through commitment, relationships and hope.

NEW SAINTS

Sr. Simona Borgogno	88	Italy	04.05.2026
Sr. Mary de Lourdes Perincherril	90	Pachmarhi	04.05.2026
Sr. Anne Brown	83	USA	09.05.2026
Sr. Christa Schwindeler	85	Norway	19.05.2026
Sr. Benjamina Caldart	103	Brazil	11.06.2026
Sr. Zenaide dal Pozzo	90	Brazil	12.06.2026

THE ECONOMY WITH A HUMAN FACE

Sr. Laveena D'Souza, CSJ

Tanmaya/India



On 16 May 2026, Pope Leo XIV held an audience at the Vatican with the leaders and employees of several Italian banking institutions. What he offered them was not a technical briefing on finance, nor a message limited to the banking sector. It was a profound reflection on the moral heart of the economy—an invitation to the world to rediscover finance as a human relationship rather than a mechanical system. His words, simple yet far reaching, spoke to every society seeking to build a more just and compassionate future.

Pope Leo began with

a truth that is both ancient and urgently needed today: finance exists for people. The human person, he said, is the first and most essential “capital.” This affirmation challenges a global culture that often treats economic systems as impersonal forces rather than human creations. The Pope recalled how the earliest Italian banks and credit unions were born from courage, creativity, and a desire to uplift local communities. Their founders understood that saving and investing were not merely technical operations but moral choices—choices capable of shaping the common good

and influencing generations.

Today, however, the economic landscape has shifted. Algorithms, automated systems, and digital platforms increasingly guide financial decisions. While these tools can improve efficiency, Pope Leo warned that they cannot replace compassion, listening, or ethical judgment. “It is not capital that enters a bank first, but people,” he reminded his audience. Behind every transaction lie stories—families striving, individuals hoping, communities dreaming. No person should ever feel reduced to a number on a screen.



Photo Credit - Vatican News

The Pope went further, insisting that financial institutions do more than manage money—they shape culture. Their decisions influence how societies define success, what they value, and whom they prioritize. When profit becomes the only compass, society loses its moral direction. But when institutions act with honesty, intelligence, and charity, they strengthen communities and build trust. Charity, he emphasized, is not an optional virtue but the deep root that allows institutions to grow in a healthy and lasting way.

For the Sisters of St. Joseph, this message resonates deeply. Our Constitution calls us to “care for the dear neighbor without distinction” and to uphold the dignity of every person. Pope Leo’s insistence that finance must serve humanity mirrors our own commitment to place the person—especially the vulnerable—at the center of every decision. Our Economic Procedures Manual reminds us that our economic life is not merely administrative but profoundly spiritual. It urges us to value each member, use resources responsibly with transparency and solidarity,

and treat goods as gifts entrusted to us for mission.

Pope Leo’s message extends far beyond religious communities or financial institutions. It is a call to every nation, every organization, every family, and every individual. It invites us to reflect on how we use resources, how we make decisions, and how we build relationships. It challenges us to imagine an economy where efficiency never overshadows empathy, where resources serve communion, and where every choice reflects our deepest values.

PRESERVING HUMAN VOICES AND FACES: AUTHENTIC COMMUNICATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Sr. Sumaira, CSJ

Pakistan



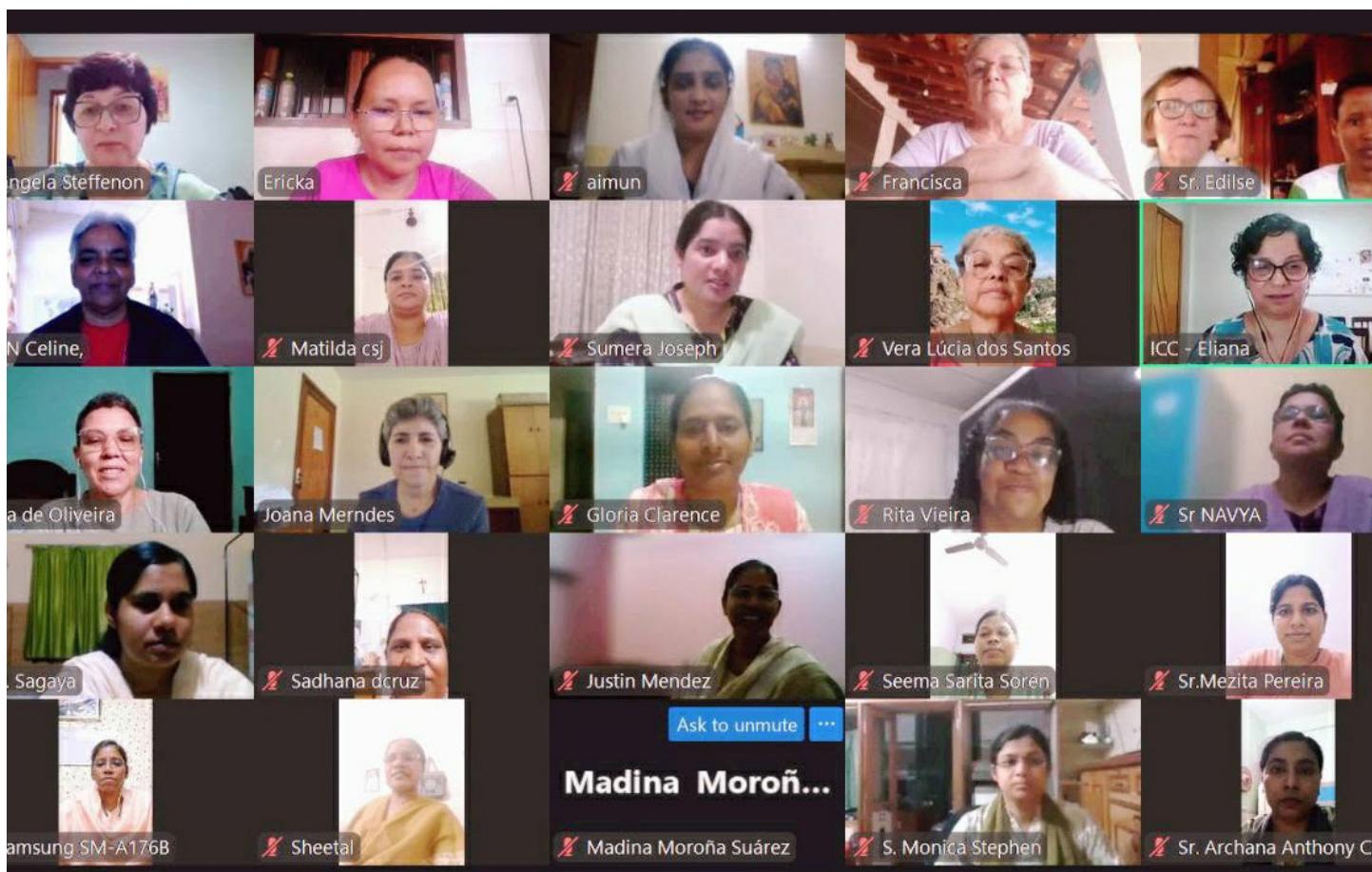
The rapid advancement of technology has transformed the way people communicate, connect, and share their lives. Digital media, social networking platforms, and artificial intelligence have opened new possibilities for interaction. Yet amid these remarkable developments, an important question remains: How can we preserve the dignity, uniqueness, and humanity of every person in an increasingly digital world? This question formed the heart of the ICC Contact Persons Meeting held online on 18 April 2026.

The gathering began with a prayer service

prepared and led by Sr. Navya. Through scripture, reflection, and prayer, participants were reminded that communication is a sacred gift entrusted to humanity by God. Communication has the power to build bridges, nurture understanding, and reveal the presence of Christ among people.

In her welcome, Sr. Celine emphasized the importance of unity among communicators. She highlighted that every communicator within the Congregation is called not only to share information but also to foster connection, understanding, and hope.

Sivonei Jose from Vatican News gave the keynote. Drawing inspiration from Pope Leo's vision, he reflected on the opportunities and challenges presented by contemporary communication technologies. One of the central insights shared during the session was the need to place the human person at the center of all communication. While technology has become an essential tool in daily life, it should never replace genuine human encounters. Behind every profile, image, message, or digital interaction is a unique person created in the image and likeness of God. Every human voice carries a



story, and every face reflects dignity, value, and identity.

In a world often dominated by speed and efficiency, communicators are invited to slow down and rediscover the importance of listening. Authentic communication begins not with speaking but with listening—listening with compassion, attentiveness, and respect. It is through listening that relationships are strengthened, communities are built, and people feel recognized and valued.

The presentation also addressed the growing influence of artificial intelligence and digital media.

While these innovations offer extraordinary opportunities for evangelization, education, and global connectivity, they must always remain tools at the service of humanity. Technology should enhance human relationships rather than diminish them.

For religious communicators, this challenge carries particular significance. The ministry of communication is rooted in the Gospel itself. Jesus communicated not only through words but also through presence, compassion, and personal encounters. He listened to the marginalized, welcomed the excluded, and restored

dignity to those whose voices had been silenced. His example continues to inspire communicators today.

The session encouraged participants to become witnesses of hope in the digital world. As the meeting concluded, there was a renewed awareness that communication is far more than a professional task; it is a ministry of presence and encounter.

In today's digital age, preserving human voices and faces is not simply a communication strategy—it is a mission. It is a commitment to ensuring that every person is seen, heard, respected, and valued.

ABUSES OF POWER AND CONSCIENCE: MANIFESTATIONS, CAUSES, AND PATHS TO TRANSFORMATION

Sr. Antonia Constantina Mandro,

Bolivia



The exercise of power and the guidance of conscience are realities inherent to all human relationships, particularly within religious and ecclesial life. Historically, the issue of abuse of power and conscience has often been silenced or been treated with great reserve. However, contemporary reflection invites us to address this matter with honesty, to identify its causes, to recognize its consequences, and to propose paths of prevention and healing.

First, it is necessary to understand that power itself is not negative: it is defined as the capacity to influence the decisions, attitudes, and behaviors of others. Abuse of power arises when this capacity is used disproportionately, without respect for the dignity, freedom, and rights of those in positions of lesser influence. Abuse of conscience, in turn, occurs when there is undue interference in the intimate, spiritual, and moral sphere of a person, influencing their

judgments, decisions, and discernment from a position of superiority. Unlike other forms of abuse, these two types tend to be less visible and, in many cases, are not explicitly addressed in ecclesiastical norms or legal codes. Yet this does not lessen their gravity; on the contrary, as they become normalized in daily life, they may go unnoticed for a long time and cause deep, lasting harm.

Several factors contribute to these dynamics taking root in relationships.

In formative environments—such as seminaries or religious houses—ways of relating are often learned through repetition, custom, or tradition, without constant critical evaluation. Thus, behaviors that reinforce asymmetry between those who hold authority and those in the process of growth become normalized. This can foster blind obedience, leaving no room for dialogue, constructive doubt, or personal discernment.

Moreover, there exists a culture that sometimes assumes the exercise of power is a privilege inherent to position or function, failing to recognize its dimension of service. As Pope Francis has pointed out, we are all susceptible to the temptation of using power for personal benefit, within a social context that often tolerates manipulation and generates indifference to inequalities in relationships. This reality means that what begins as a relationship of guidance or accompaniment can gradually change into a dynamic of domination.

The impact of these abuses affects both the individual who suffers them, damaging their self-esteem, freedom, and self-confidence, and the institution, weakening its

credibility and its ability to live out the values it proclaims. In response, it is not enough to punish specific cases; a conversion of mentalities and structures is required.

Communities are called to constantly ask themselves: Do we critically evaluate how we exercise our influence? Are we capable of accompanying without imposing criteria or decisions? Only through continuous review, transparency, and

prioritization of individual well-being is it possible to prevent these abuses and build healthy, healing relationships.

Abuses of power and conscience are neither isolated nor inevitable: they are dynamics that arise from cultural and relational structures that can be transformed. Making them visible, understanding their causes, and acting from truth and respect for human dignity is a shared responsibility.



WE LIVE AS A LEAVEN OF UNITY IN THE WORLD

Sr. Gisela Heitz, CSJ

Denmark



“When four lost French Sisters of Saint Joseph stood on the dock in Copenhagen on Pentecost 1856, they brought a new spring for the Catholic Church in Denmark. And not just for the Church, but for countless people in need. What they lacked in financial means, they had in “courage” and warm hands. They wrote a new chapter in the good book of charity. May we continue to write in it, inspired by the Spirit of Pentecost”.

This is one of the intercessions from the prayer service held on May 11, 2026, when we celebrated the CSJ’s 170-year presence in Northern Europe: first Denmark (1856), followed by Sweden (1862), Norway (1865), and later Iceland (1896). In her welcome, S. Susanne Hoyos, the regional coordinator, told the

“countless people” gathered in the former motherhouse church in Copenhagen that the sisters in Denmark have been taking their vows in this church since 1905. Very dear guests had arrived from Rome—the entire General

Council was present—and from our neighboring province in Norway, Sisters Marit Brinkmann and Lucia Thi My were with us. Another great joy for us was that the church was represented by two bishops: the Lutheran



S. Dolores Lahr presents the papal blessing to S. Susanne Hoyos

bishop of the Diocese of Copenhagen, Peter Skov-Jakobsen, and the Catholic bishop of the Diocese of Copenhagen, Czeslaw Kozon. Together with associate members, collaborators and colleagues, sisters from other congregations, priests, and many friends, we experienced the unity that we, as Sisters of St. Joseph, have committed ourselves to fostering.

The service began with a procession in which six symbols were carried into the church. The first symbol was our Constitution, which our Superior General, S. Dolores Lahr, presented to the congregation and placed in a specially prepared spot. The words read aloud by Sr. Dolores had a powerful impact: Our choice of services and professional commitments is guided by our concern to proclaim the Gospel, and 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. A picture of the first four sisters was placed in front of the Constitution, and the sisters' names were read aloud: S. Anne-Thérèse Parent, S. Marie-Stéphanie François, S. Marie-Placide Dijoud, S. Anne-Sofie Vassal. These four courageous women truly came alive among us. Representatives from the



S. Marianne Bode reads the names of the first 5 sisters with S. Angela Ramme looking on

former schools and hospitals carried banners alongside our associate members. The procession concluded with the presentation of a loaf of bread and a glass of leaven—a symbol of the parable in the Gospel of Matthew (13:33): *“The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until the whole was leavened.”* In her reflection on this Gospel, Sr. Gisela Heitz highlighted the essential characteristics of the “leaven of unity”: the desire for community, the willingness to engage in respectful and empathetic dialogue and to listen, the willingness to live reconciliation and forgiveness, the willingness to be inclusive, and the desire for and acceptance

of diversity. The reflection noted that Pope Leo, in his inaugural homily, said *“I would like that our first great desire be that we.... be a sign of unity and communion which becomes a leaven for a reconciled world.”*

The two bishops present blessed the congregation with one voice, quoting the Book of Numbers: *“The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.”*

The prayer service was followed by a reception where we had the pleasure of meeting a wide variety of people while enjoying a delicious buffet - a true experience of togetherness.

TWO PILGRIMS WRITE FROM THE HEART OF OUR CHARISM

Sr. Mezita & Sr. Deanne, CSJ

Nagpur/India



We were fifteen sisters. Seven congregations. Five continents. One charism. For one week in Le Puy-en-Velay, birthplace of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. We gathered for Roots and Wings, an international pilgrimage into the source of who we are. We did not come as tourists. We came as pilgrims: traveling light, staying vulnerable, willing to be changed. And so, we were.

We do not expect a place to speak. But Le Puy did. Before we knew its story, but in this journey, it became a Holy Ground. We walked the cobblestones where our first Sisters walked, stood in the first kitchen where they gathered, knelt in Notre-Dame and the Cathedral, and paused beneath the tree of the Martyrs. Each site handed us something we could not name but could feel: ancient, alive, and asking something of us. Their blazing passion now lives in us! Hence, the phrase that would not leave us all week was this: Women of

rock and fire. Our foundresses were grounded like the stone beneath their feet and ablaze with God's love. In the lace workshops, we watched an artisan weave with slow, patient hands, each thread placed with deliberate care. That image stayed with us. Our charism is not built in moments of glory. It is woven, thread by thread, through faithful daily love.

We arrived as strangers. We left as companions. Something happened in the space between our languages, in the shared silences, the prayers offered in French and English. When we recreated the scene of the first kitchen, we understood something we had only known in our heads: the charism of unity is not an idea. It was born exactly this way; people gathering, breaking bread, receiving one another's difference as a gift to reverence.

Our diversity was not an obstacle to communion. It was

its very medium. We began, like the first community, to sing a new hymn — not in unison, but in harmony.

"Communion is not created by sameness. It is born when differences are received with reverence."

One of the most freeing gifts of the week was understanding, truly, the difference between charism, mission, and ministry. Charism is the gift of unioning love given to our founders and handed to us. Mission is its purpose: that all may be one. Ministry is the particular form it takes. From ministry, we may one day retire. From mission, never. The charism is not a role. It belongs to the person. Because of love, we give ourselves. That giving has no retirement.

Father Medaille's Eucharistic Letter gave us the image: simple bread, offered everywhere, to all, the presence is the same. To live poverty is to carry love contentedly regardless of how much or little



Together at the Centre International

we possess. Chastity: to be free love-bringers, holding no one possessively. Obedience: to have total confidence in God, going wherever love requires, unburdened by anything except union.

We are not the beginning of this story. We stand on the shoulders of women who said yes long before us and their courage reaches across centuries to ask something of us now: How will we carry this charism into a wounded world? How will we widen the circle? How will we become bridges where there is division?

Father Medaille's founding vision is a double union, with the Uncreated Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit, and with the Created Trinity of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. The goal is not achievement. Not productivity,

Union. And the "perfection" Jesus speaks of on the mountain does not mean flawlessness; it means all-inclusiveness. A love like God's, who lets the sun rise and rain fall on the just and unjust alike. That is what we are called to become.

There is an early portrait of the daughter of Saint Joseph that arrested us: eyes open to a broken and beloved world, ears attentive to suffering, spirit never settled into comfortable complacency and sleeves rolled up. Not excluding the humble, the unnoticed, the difficult. On her face: the quiet inner glow of one whose life has been not perfect, but faithful.

We want to be those women. In a world shattered by war, polarisation, and broken community, we are not simply needed, we are urgently needed. Not for our

programs or our plans, but for our being: a living sign that unity is possible, that love outlasts division, that the God who is communion still dwells among us. We came to Le Puy as seekers. We left with fire.

The heartbeat of this charism is not grand success or perfect community. Just the humble, stubborn, Spirit-driven willingness to return; choosing union over ego, love over weariness, God's call over our own discouragement. Today, in the midst of war and unrest, let us not be driven by ego. Let us be drawn by Love. From the center, the circle widens.

The yes of the women of Le Puy still breathes life into our own yes.

Ensemble pour un grand amour – Together for a great love. Try Again!

MINISTRY CONTINUES IN THE IRISH REGION

Sr. Celine Duffy, CSJ

Ireland



Many Religious Orders in Ireland were founded in response to local needs, such as education,

healthcare, poverty, bereavement, needs to which the Government of the day did not respond. In Ireland today we have

similar needs in many areas: health, housing, financial support for children, lack of employment, integration of immigrants, domestic abuse,



Sisters Eileen, Joan Margaret, Marian, Sarah and Celine at Mass in the nursing home

climate change and isolation. Although we, Sisters of St Joseph of Chambéry, are few in number, we are responding to various needs where possible, in the realization that our presence makes a difference.

We are a Region having only five Sisters: Sr. Marian Connor, Sr. Joan Margaret Kelly, Sr. Sarah Goss, Sr. Celine Duffy, Sr. Eileen Silke. Each Sister is involved in different capacities in parish work. They are Eucharistic ministers, lectors, involved in and organising Lectio Divina. Some do Funeral Ministry, assisting the priest during the funeral and leading the prayers at the burial, as well as working with bereavement groups. Those in Care Homes meet

the residents and speak with them, read at Mass, help as Eucharistic ministers when needed. Another local ministry of the sisters is school catechesis. At the international level, we offer help in English online to any sisters who wish to avail of this service.

We all live in close proximity to one other so it is easy to meet together regularly for prayer, discussion and feast days, as well as on many other occasions

As we reflect on the beginnings and growth of the Irish/Welsh region we realize how rich our heritage is. The Irish/Welsh Region was originally formed by an amalgamation of Sisters who had been on mission in other countries and others

who came to give assistance. Irish sisters who were on mission in India, France, Norway returned to Ireland to establish the Irish mission together with some sisters from the USA.

In latter years many of our sisters went out to be on mission in other countries: Sweden, Liberia, Tanzania, Pakistan, France. For all this history we give praise and glory to God.

An Irish poet Brendan Kennelly, in his poem BEGIN sums up where we seem to be, at present on our journey when he says: "Something that will not acknowledge conclusion, Insists that we forever begin". He reminds us that we need to cross the bridge from the past to the future dealing with loneliness and death and not giving in.

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