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## GENERAL COUNCIL

# Called to Move Beyond...

**S. Sally M. Hodgdon**

*General Council*

**A**s I reflect on the two weeks of our 2020 Extended Council, 14 days spent with the leaders of our Provinces, Regions and Mission, I continue to hear the call to move beyond... a call echoed by many voices in different ways. Certainly, we are called to move beyond the narrow world of our everyday existence, which for most of us means living in one small area of a village, town, or city of one state, located in a country that is only a part of a continent and an even smaller part of the planet. But when the 50 or so leaders, natives of over 10 countries, were gathered at Monte Cucco, it did not matter if we ministered in a small village or lived and worked in the same building, or if every day we traveled around our district. For all of us, our vision was enlarged by the many diverse cultures with their richness that could be touched and explored. This experience made the vastness of our

planet seem smaller and made it easier to think about moving beyond our own neighborhoods.

To move beyond means to widen the scope of our concerns, even if it means leaving the good we are doing to move elsewhere for an even greater good. This movement requires willingness to take risks, to move into the unknown. It requires flexibility and resilience, a life deeply rooted in our relationship



with God and a profound sense of our identity as women religious or committed associates.

If we are to respond to this call to move beyond, to be a greater part of the global reality, then we must be willing to step out of our routine, out of the circles of people we are always with. Then we can move into other places where we can

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connect with new people, new cultures and new faces, persons who reflect the same compassion for the global concerns we wish to embrace. Being called to move beyond requires not holding back. We must move forward to a new place or deepen something that already exists. For a few the new place may be another continent or another part of our own country. For most of us the new place may be only a short walk down a street or into a neighborhood we never visited. This call to deepen something that already exists allows all ages to be part of moving beyond. Each of us needs to go beyond our own prejudice or bias, to go beyond our own fears of inadequacy, so that we can freely welcome others, including the sisters in our community or the lay staff

with whom we live or work. Our charism of unity and our desire to offer joyful hospitality to others requires that we do this.

Now is the time for us to bring our charism of building communion to the areas of global concern, areas fraught with chaos and conflict. Our time is now and the need is urgent. Sister Pat Murray, IBVM, asked us if when we imagine ourselves as a global community, do we see ourselves having a presence in the midst of areas of conflict, such as the Middle East or the Democratic Republic of the Congo? Do we use our corporate voice and join it with others to raise awareness of injustices in such countries?

Tim Norton, SVD, in his presentation on Intercultural Living stated that a culture

is a series of learned behaviors. As a congregation, called to focus on living interculturality, desiring to know more about other cultures and learning to appreciate the differences in our cultures, we will have to move beyond the learned behaviors of our particular culture.

During the session on Formation, we were asked if we are willing to move beyond our current lifestyle as part of the "how" we will welcome new generations of women who wish to live religious life with us.

These calls to "move beyond" do not generate an easy response, but respond we must, relying on the grace of God who waits for us in whatever that "beyond" space constitutes for each of us.

## Extended Council 2020

The Extended Council touched the heart of every sister who was blessed to be there. Each one felt challenged by the Spirit through the speakers and the rich discussions.

We offer you four reflections on that experience. S. Marit and Jona were among the provincials who had participated in other Extended Councils, while S. Linda and Navya, both councilors, participated in an Extended Council for the first time.

## Movement of the Spirit

I experienced the movement of the Spirit very strongly in the congregation when the General Council invited the whole provincial team to participate in the Extended Council 2020, Rome. This was the first time the whole council participated in an Extended Council and for me it was the first time I participated in a congregational meeting.

From the opening ritual, that brought out a deep experience of what it means to be 'Incarnating Love with Joy', to the closing ritual, where the leadership teams signed their commitment to this challenge, I experienced how the Spirit continued to inspire the sisters present at the Extended Council 2020.

I felt the Spirit opening up new horizons of thought and action for the congregation. The opening address of

S. Sally and the session of Sr. Patricia Murray, IBVM, made me aware of my own comfort zones as a religious and challenged me to launch into the unknown, welcome the stranger, and extend my tent to really incarnate love with joy.

The session of Fr. Tim Norton, SVD, on 'Interculturality for Mission and Ministry', was an invitation placed before the congregation to embrace intercultural living as a response to the world today where communities become more international and cross cultural. I got a totally new understanding of interculturality and the need for religious communities to become more intercultural.

All through the extended council what I experienced was the openness of the group to welcome and embrace



**S. Navya Neelamvilail**  
Province of Pachmarhi, India

the 'new'. This was a platform where everyone shared with freedom, respect and openness. The presence of all the council members from different provinces did make a difference.

# “Trasna” – the Crossing Place

I was very grateful to have been given the opportunity to participate in the Extended Council from January 12 to January 26th. It was a meeting that both challenged and inspired from the very beginning with S. Sally's opening address when she stated that we, and all the baptized, are called to manifest God to our world by offering an experience of God as LOVE.

The challenge was reiterated by S. Pat Murray with her challenge to expand our tents with global vision and action. While the challenge to “expand our tent” was not new to us, Pat presented this challenge in the context of the poem “Trasna” by S. Raphael Considine, IBVM. As Pat read the poem, the image projected was a person sitting in the middle of a suspension bridge contemplating the

decision to go back to that which is comfortable, familiar and safe, or move forward into an unknown adventure. This was both a question and image that I found myself pondering many times during this meeting as we were asked to reflect on what might be holding us back from responding to the needs of the globalized world.

Looking around the meeting room at the various cultures and languages present one could not help but see the globalized world made visible in each Sister of St. Joseph present at the meeting. It was inspiring for me to hear and see the many ways that our Congregation was responding to the needs in our globalized world.

I continue to reflect on the image of Trasna and the question posed by Pat Murray, “How are we, as members of an



**S. Linda Pepe**  
Province of USA

International Congregation, to imagine ourselves as members of the global community?” For me, one concrete way to act as a member of a global community is through a more conscious care of the earth. The new focus of the JPIC Commission will, hopefully, help all of us to realize that our single actions have an impact on a global society.

## Challenged to grow

The theme, Incarnating LOVE with Joy, evoked an experience of resurrection in me, one that would enable me and others to rise; setting us free to bring new life to birth in all who cross our path. This is Trasna, “the crossing place,” which Pat Murray spoke of. The two weeks of the Extended Council were a “Crossing place” for me where I learned and experienced something about the challenge of the internal and external journey. I am enriched, challenged and renewed by the meeting with all its rich input and the many opportunities for sharing. We began on the Epiphany with the visit of the magi who followed the true light. For me, to follow the star means to expand my mind and heart in order to change my fixed ideas,

to let go of my individual path and thus be a creative listener, hearing the timely and the untimely voice of the God with passion and love. “Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide” “do not hold back”: “Lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.” These words ring in my mind and heart in my daily life, urging me to Rejoice in the different, Listen creatively, Understand the new.

My hope and desire is to continue walking the road of life, living Christ's love more profoundly, and celebrating the differences in living our inter-cultural journey. It became clearer to me during the two weeks this is my vocation and mission



**S. Jona Chinnapan**  
Province of France

as a Sister of Saint Joseph incarnating love with joy. For me it was an unforgettable Extended Council. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi “Our greatest ability as humans is not to change the world; but to change ourselves.” Yes it is my responsibility to change myself.

# Reflections on the Extended council

**A**s one of the oldest members of the Extended Council I was asked to share my impressions of our time together at Monte Cucco.. I was very happy with the theme “Incarnating love with joy,” which pointed to the fact that this is an ongoing process. We are never finished with incarnating love; it is constantly renewing us, bringing to life its contagious fruit which is joy, as S. Sally said in her excellent opening address. For the first time, councilors were invited along with the provincials. At first I was skeptical, thinking of the time and money. But in the end I was happy with the decision because it created an open atmosphere, with more people involved and engaged in the different topics, and the initial preparation for the General Chapter. I really enjoyed the opening address of S. Sally, the vision of global religious life by Pat Murray, IBVM, and Interculturality by Tim Norton SVD. I was challenged when we were reminded how important it is to be global and intercultural people, updating our Charisma, being open to new frontiers, both geographically and mentally. This will open us to work with other congregations and laity, to network and strengthen partnerships. Together we are called to respond to the cries of the poor and move forward to new peripheries, reclaiming the passion and zeal of our founder. Thus will we encourage greater creativity and leadership skills in our sisters and living in solidarity with mother earth, caring for her. During the meeting the question of “Who am I as sister of St. Joseph in the

world of today?” was raised in me. Or, as Pope Francis expressed it, “For whom am I?” here and now? Have we lost any essentials? What would Father Médaille say to us to-day? Are we working for our own love and honour or are we working to bring love to our dear neighbor? Why are so many young sisters leaving? Who is at the center of our lives? Jesus Christ and his mission? Or ourselves? Do we still believe, like Mary, that “nothing is impossible for God”? We try to live interculturality, but what does that mean? Do we enjoy only the goods of the other culture, which is comfortable, or are we on mission with the poor, the people in need? Do we dare to go to other places that need the Charisma of the Sisters of St. Joseph, and not to hold back? We need to lengthen our cords and deepen our stakes. We have to become experts in communion and learn to be open to an encounter within communities and other people. An idea I never thought about before was how we speak of mission. Do we think of it as a lifetime commitment? In some places sisters are on mission for their lifetime. They will never go back to their home country, except for short visits. Was that the original idea of Mère Felicité and others who sent sisters on mission – a lifelong mission? How we answer this question makes a difference in how we live interculturality. For me, another point is that of community life. What does this mean when we live separately in our own apartments, even when needed for our mission? How difficult is it to come back and



**S. Marit Brinkman**  
Province of Norway

get integrated in a community again? For me the important thing is prayer, community prayer, shared prayer, intercultural community life and time for retreat and personal private prayer. Jesus Christ will tell us who is the center of our lives: ourselves or Jesus Christ? We heard many inspiring ideas about leadership, canon law and by Sr. Philo about the importance of formation. We heard about the situation of our sisters from Pinerolo and China and shared the fruits of the Spirit in group discussions. The General Council and the ICC group worked hard, everything was well prepared, from the excellent prayer booklet to the loving and open atmosphere. The great idea of creating a WhatsApp group makes it easier to be in contact, especially after arriving at home. I received much inspirations and energy once more and pray that this experience be a blessing for all of us – to live incarnating love with joy.

## NEW SAINTS

|                               |     |         |            |
|-------------------------------|-----|---------|------------|
| S. Nair Mazzochin             | 80  | Brazil  | 12.01.2020 |
| S. Mônica Pinheiro de Azevedo | 103 | Brazil  | 17.01.2020 |
| S. Thérèse Leclair            | 95  | USA     | 17.01.2020 |
| S. Sabina Miglia Vacca        | 91  | Brazil  | 19.01.2020 |
| S. Anne Schmitz               | 79  | Denmark | 25.01.2020 |



# Global warming: what does it mean?

**Giosuè Pacchiano**

*Italy*

One of the problems constantly afflicting the whole of humanity today is global warming. Nature has been suffering for years because of human beings, and no one is acting on it, a problem that even the "creator" cannot solve. And we all suffer, directly or indirectly. The first fundamental aspect is pollution, which far from humanity's revolutionary vision, began with the industrial revolution. Factories, vehicles, waste, with those having more, wasting more, are the main causes of this problem. There are many other consequences, such as the increase in food prices developing due to the lack of fertility of the land. This is to say nothing of those who live from their own harvest, who in this precise historical period, find themselves in clear

difficulty. The poor, who are indirect victims of the ferocious labor of the powerful, are also particularly affected. Unfortunately, we can only say that the very idea of nature has been lost, since today it is seen more as an object than as a creature, which should be well cared for, unharmed. The meaning of respect for the environment has been lost, this majestic work, humanity's only primordial shelter. Simply put, humanity without nature cannot live, and we are experiencing the actual demonstration of this today. We must see nature as a constant of our existence, a fundamental factor, imperishable, necessary; but human supremacy

reigns supreme in a way that is close to contempt. Sea levels rise, oceans are full of plastic, marine animals perish, and trees burn as if they were



useless. The 'revenge' of nature has arrived, and we

deserve it.

What does it cost us to have a little extra sensitivity towards something that is not that far from us?



# Associates meet: Focus on climate change

**S. Gisela Heitz**

*Denmark*

As is traditional in the Danish province, the “inspiration day” for associates from Denmark and Sweden and sisters took place in October 2019 in the retreat house at Stella Matutina, with a focus on what we today call “climate change.”

The program began with a nature meditation. After a prayer in the chapel, all participants were invited to move out into the garden and enjoy the freshness of the morning and the beauty of plants, trees, earth and water. The inspiration day is spent in a silent and calm atmosphere, which nevertheless is compatible with sharing between individuals and in groups. Yet the atmosphere of silence fosters the gift of listening ...

In her reflections, Sr. Angela Rammé highlighted aspects of the issue of climate change that are touching our daily lives. She did this after the audience was reminded that we are called to contribute here and now to the building of a world of justice, love and peace and to live an ethical style of life in which every choice we make is grounded

in ethical awareness of its impact on society and the planet. (Constitution, page 6)

A key question of the climate change issue is how to motivate people to change their daily habits and behavior. These are - in Denmark - ordinary habits like high meat consumption, travelling a lot by plane, predominantly individual transport by car, a consumer approach to life that leads to overconsumption, very high energy use and a highly digitalized society. Denmark's ecological footprint is, according to data from the WWF's bi-annual Living Planet Report, the world's fourth largest and the largest in Europe.

With reference to Pope Francis' encyclical letter *Laudato Si* (2015), Sr. Angela pointed out what is necessary in order to make a change of habits possible. Pope Francis is convinced ... that change is impossible without motivation and a process of education (13). The end should be a “new lifestyle”. The Pope states that an integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness. ....Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to .... appreciate the



small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, .... This implies avoiding the dynamic of dominion and the mere accumulation of pleasures. Such sobriety, when lived freely and consciously, is liberating. ....Happiness means knowing how to limit some needs which only diminish us, and being open to the many different possibilities which life can offer. Then, looking at the situation of Denmark, some climate-friendly changes in daily life were proposed: to explore eating habits with a greater vegetarian basis, to develop the habit of reusing things (furniture, clothes, ...) to travel without a plane, to use public transportation and the bike. To make these changes effective, it would be important to create a win-win situation, so that in giving up something, I receive something better, for example more vitality and joy, better relationships, having more time, feeling healthier. The participants had some time for personal reflection on questions that had been prepared, including: What is my concern? Where do I see concern and care for the environment in my surroundings? What could be a common project for us as sisters and associates? The sharing in small groups later reflected many experiences and the joy of doing things differently and creatively, trying out new ways in order to care for our earth, the provider of life for all and the gift from God.





# Is everything fine with... We the People of India?

**S. Laveena D'Souza**

*Tanmaya Province - India*

Activists, students, young and old, women and children, of all castes, creeds, and religions are joining hands in demonstrating nationwide, protesting against India's new Citizenship Amendment Act. Since December 09, 2019, WE the people of India are on the streets and in public places raising our voices as the ruling Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), enacted the Citizenship Amendment Act with a vast majority.

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution declares India a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic. Yet the hidden agenda of the ruling party (BJP) desires to make India a Hindu nation, contrary to our Constitution. The Citizenship Amendment Act, which makes religion a criterion for citizenship, is in opposition to equality for all within the territory of India, a Fundamental Right enshrined in the constitution. A twenty-one-day Gandhi – Peace March, which began from Mumbai's Gateway of India on January 09, successfully reached Delhi on January 30, the day Gandhiji ("Ji" added to a name is a way of honoring the person) was assassinated, traversing almost six Indian states.

Despite people's rage over the Citizenship Amendment, the Home Minister of India asserts that "2024 is the deadline for completing the National Register of Citizenship across the country". In some states, detention camps are being built for those whose citizenship is not recognized. When institutions fail, people rise and this is clear throughout India. In Mumbai students from various colleges protested for two days and two nights



*Students protest outside Gateway of India, Mumbai*

outside the Gateway of India. This was in response to the violence and brutalities committed against students by the Delhi Police at Jawaharlal Nehru College (JNU), Delhi. Throughout the country people have sensed that there is something going wrong and we must forget our differences and join hands. Since December 11, 2019, there has been a 24/7 protest in Delhi, a peaceful sit-in, led by women against the citizenship act and the ensuing police intervention against students who were opposing the Amendment. We can see many women and students playing a great role to safeguard the Indian Constitution. The Citizenship Amendment Act, excluding many Muslims from citizenship, is not the only recent law which is contrary to the constitution. The National

Register of Citizens, which has been used to exclude minorities in the state of Assam, is yet another issue that the people are protesting. Modi's 'good days' have brought down the economy of this country. Law and order have been silenced. The ruling party is rewriting the Indian Constitution to suit their ideology while WE the people of India join in a protest demanding "Save India" and listen to "WE the people of India".



# Pilgrimage from Savoy to southern Brazil

**S. Dominga Zolet**

*France*

A group of 14 pilgrims from the Diocese of Savoy (France) set out to southern Brazil from October 20 to November 4, 2019. The aim of this pilgrimage was to see the places where the first Sisters of St. Joseph of Moutiers had gone on mission. From 1896 to 1950 a total of 92 sisters and five priests from the Tarentaise Valley of Savoy went to southern Brazil.

The pilgrimage was organized by the Diocesan Service for Missionary Cooperation in collaboration with the Sisters of St. Joseph from the provinces of France and Brazil.

This idea came to light in July 2018 during a 'Day of the Universal Church', whose theme was: "Remembering the missionary fervour of Tarentaise, between 1850 and 1950, summarized as: Celebrating the past, enlivening the present and encouraging the future". During the preparation many people were involved in looking for historical documents and contacting family members of the Sisters of St. Joseph who left for Brazil. These were the first ones involved in the day and interested in the pilgrimage. Around 100 people participated in this event, 35 of whom were family members of the missionary Sisters.

For the visit, the group prioritized sharing time with Sisters from some communities, schools, social projects and one hospital. The theme of these visits was: "How to live the mission of the baptized and the Sisters of St. Joseph today in Brazil and France?"

We were greatly enriched and touched as we met with various groups: different communities of the Sisters, a Justice and Peace group (JPIC - Brazil); Capuchin friars from Garibaldi, Vicar and Mayor of Pinto Bandeira, the Pilgrimage of Capilinhas (small wooden enclosure – miniature chapel – for a statue of



Our Lady), an expression of popular devotion, celebrations in cemeteries, praying a Litany of Intercession with the names of the French Sisters who are buried in Garibaldi and Curitiba and a talk on the situation of the Church in Brazil. The testimony of the elderly Sisters was striking for us, the pilgrims. These elderly sisters with the strength of their past engagements and faithfulness in prayer, continue the mission very fervently. We can say: "We, the French, were still seeing the fruits produced by the evangelization of the Sisters of Moutiers! And great fruits!"

Our meeting with employees in Cajuru (Paraná) was a special highlight. The employees organized a one-act play on the history of the Congregation. It was a great moment to "look at the past to enliven the present and encourage the future". In addition to the planned

visits we also visited historic places, cooperatives for wine and fruits. We enhanced our knowledge about the folklore of Brazil and tasted good regional foods.

Though we had a positive experience it did not prevent us from seeing the socio-political and ecclesial situation in Brazil. Why are so many children, youth and elderly in need of social projects? Why so many slums? Street dwellers? Street vendors? Decadence in health and education! We see a setback in the social policies and the Ecclesial Base Communities. We ask ourselves: why this "indifference" and a certain inertia in the people, in the unions and in socio-pastoral movements?

Even in the face of this reality, we can say that we saw the witness of a Church where the little ones and the poor find their place.





# The Importance of Sacraments in Family Life

**S. Catherine George**

*Pakistan*

**A**t the present time in Pakistan there are many challenges in family life. Expenses are more than most can face. Poor people are suffering because of political, social, economic and religious issues which often lead to psychological problems, depression, individualism and prejudice. Though our Christian community is facing many trials the people are sustaining their faith. We Saint Joseph sisters are serving in the midst of the people and observe the critical situations of the families. Since we have good interaction with both Christian and Muslim communities in our school and parish, we decided to organize a family renewal program for husbands and wives. The theme of this program, held in Jameelabad, Multan, was "The Importance of Sacraments in Family Life." We invited Fr. Nadeem Patras, the director of "Family Life Commission" in the Multan diocese and Fr. Farhan, the Rector of the minor seminary in Multan, to speak about sacramental life. Fr. Farhan described the importance of Sacraments in family life. He began with the mother's role of participating in creation by bringing a child into this world and then to receive the light in baptism. The sacrament of reconciliation brings family members closer to one another if they practice forgiveness in their family life. He also noted that much as the parents share time, conversation and food with their children, so God feeds us with the spiritual food we need to have the same attitude of Jesus Christ, living and promoting love, union, tolerance, reconciliation and care. Father Farhan focused on the importance of family prayers.

While the sacrament of Matrimony is, in the words of Pope Francis, "a gift given for the sanctification and salvation of the spouses since their mutual belonging is



a real representation . . . of the same relationship between Christ and the Church." Then Father Nadeem Patras asked different questions regarding conflicts, arguments, disagreements and misunderstandings which take place or are contrary to their expectations. The women said that these happen when needs are not fulfilled, while the men said that conflicts occur when their wife does not fulfill their demands or misunderstands their thoughts. Today such conflictual situations can end in divorce. This is helped by the joint family system in Pakistan, where the families of several brothers share the

same house with the parents. This can easily lead to interference by other family members and results in many married couples disrespecting the sanctity of this sacrament. During the session, the priests and sisters advised the newly married couples to accept, trust, love and treat each other with dignity as a gift of God. When this is passed on to the children it will also be passed on to the whole world and to the church, with the spouses becoming a sign of God's presence.

The sharing during the session brought out many hopes, dreams and commitments.



# LAC JPIC Meeting – Bangalore

**S. Navya Neelamvilail**

*Pachmarhi Province - India*

**T**hirty three sisters from the three congregations of Lyon, Annecy and Chambéry came together at Ananda Sadan – Provincial House of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyon at Bangalore from November 13 to 15, 2019. These JPIC members gathered at the request of S. Barbara Bozak, CSI, chief administrative officer and coordinator of the presence of the Congregations of St. Joseph at the United Nations in New York and Geneva. She took advantage of her presence in Bangalore for another meeting to meet with the sisters of JPIC-LAC-India. In consultation with the Provincial leadership teams, the JPIC-India Core Team members, Rojamani (Lyon), Dorothy Beck (Chambéry) and Anitha (Annecy) organised this three-day gathering.

Barbara explained the structure and functions of the UN as well as the role of NGOs. She also described how the Congregations of St. Joseph is an NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council at the UN, which gives the group a voice within the UN structure. Referring to the Sustainable Development Goals, Barbara explained how Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) can be achieved and the world transformed through these 17 goals with their focus on people, planet and prosperity.



Each participant enlightened the group about how her province is involved in JPIC work through their ministries. This sharing gave Barbara a clear picture of the work that is done at different levels in the three congregations. Looking toward the coming year and beyond, the LAC group decided upon a concrete action plan for the next three years, focusing on: climate change/ saving the planet, protecting life and gender equality. The Concrete Actions that were proposed and agreed upon are: a Common Prayer service prepared by each of the eight provinces of LAC once in 3 months on a particular theme of those months; Planting of trees; Signature campaigns. S. Barbara advised the group to upload their activities to Facebook to include a wider social circle.

In her welcome and opening words, S. Cecily Saveriyar, the Provincial of Lyon's St Joseph province, said that St. Joseph sisters will be more effective if we stand

together as one LAC family and together raise our voices against injustice, violence and other issues in and around India and the world. It was also a concern of Barbara that Lyon, Annecy and Chambéry congregations are not yet working together as one effective body for justice and peace issues in India. "We are more effective when we are a larger group," said Barbara.

The next LAC JPIC meeting will be in November 2020 in the Province of Tanmaya, Bhopal. The present core team members will continue until the meeting of the LAC leadership teams in February 2020, when they will suggest a new team. The sisters who emerged from this gathering as the new core team are: Neha of Chambéry, Remya of Annecy and Vinnarasi of Lyon. As always, the Lyon-Annecy-Chambéry gathering brought greater closeness to the three congregations and we look forward to becoming a strong LAC body of St. Joseph in India.



# Social media and us

**S. Laveena D'Souza**

*Tanmaya Province - India*

Many of us use social media in our lives, to connect with people and build relationships. It is important to note that social media combine public and personal communication. In the past, there was a vast distinction between personal and public communication. Personal communication was limited to

YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram and others, people are able to upload information, connect with others and share this content.

Although we may think these platforms are free of cost, they exist to make a profit, which is the ultimate motive of all business or media industries. In order to do this, the companies need to sell a product. In the instance of social

our information, which is then shared or sold. Even when we delete these accounts, the information that we have fed into the database is stored forever. While we are on social media, we need to prioritize our safety. Every social media channel has ways, in which one can increase privacy on that network. It is important to educate oneself to keep personal accounts as private as possible. Some guidelines for safety are the following. Whenever you are online, turn your location's visibility off. Create strong passwords (Do not use your birthdate). Do not share your contact information publicly. Do not tag yourself or friends in



conversations with parents, friends or those we knew. Public communication, like television and newspapers, were meant for broadcasting. But social media has now combined these two types of communication into one. It is important to understand how social media platforms function and why they exist. First of all, these platforms, owned by large corporate companies, capture data and content from others. Through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn,

media, the companies sell user data to advertisers or to those who want to promote their products or service. This is why they allow us to use these platforms, so they might use our activities to make a profit. The social media platforms store all

photos. When you do, those photos of you then become discoverable when people search your name. Do not post your whereabouts.

It is important to have communication and to explore social media, which is useful for gathering information. At the same time, we do not need to be friends with everyone who requests. Let us use these social platforms wisely, keeping our private information safe and secure and always remembering we are in the world but not of the world.



# Gathering of missionaries in France

**Srs. Savita, Sapna, Nirmal, Sujata & Jayarani**

*France*

**T**welve Indian sisters of the Congregations of Annecy, Lyon and Chambéry met on 27-29 October, 2019 in Lyon to support each other and be strengthened as missionaries in France. They benefited from the presence of three newly professed sisters: Srs. Nirmal, Sapna and Savita of the Congregation of Chambéry. The main objective of this gathering was to enrich each other and to have an authentic, open sharing about their missions, new learnings, challenges and surprises. The sisters of Lyon had planned these three days very well, with prayer, recollection, visits to different communities of our sisters, the Archives of Mother St. John Fontbonne, the museum of the history of the first Christians, as well as a visit to the tomb of Mother Fontbonne. They began their meeting with a half-day recollection, during which Sister Rita, a sister of Lyon, developed the theme, being an agent of change "ecologically and personally". Each sister took an active part in sharing her experience - including some common observations highlighted below. The French are very welcoming. The people



are generous, open-minded and positive, happy to have a sister in their group. Each expressed her hope and desire to continue this missionary presence in France.

The sisters shared their various activities. They find themselves as a living presence in the midst of our sisters in and outside of community. Their pastoral work includes catechism in schools and parishes, the animation of Masses in parishes and homes for the elderly and participation in different prayer groups. They also work with the poor, helping distribute provisions or meals to refugees and immigrants, either at the Savoyard Canteen or at the Resto du Coeur. They are in contact with young girls in boarding schools and in their pastoral work with schoolchildren. They also visit the sick and elderly in nursing homes and hospitals.

The group had some surprises, i.e., the lack of commitment among married couples and the many children suffering from parental separations, as well as how few young people attend church. They also spoke of their difficulty in speaking openly about God and noted the aging of the sisters and the lack of vocations to religious life. Above all, they said they are very proud and privileged to be Sisters of St Joseph. Being at the place of the origins of the congregation fills them with energy and enthusiasm to move forward and overcome any kind of obstacles. Their zeal is evident in their words: "As new shoots grow, we grow and expand our branches to manifest the love of God in the footsteps of our founder, Father Médaille. This is our conviction and desire at the end of these three days of meetings."

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