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GENERAL COUNCIL

Tucum Ring

S. Ieda Maria Tomazini

General Council

In it everyone has rights and duties, everyone has a voice and opportunity. Liberation theology, which was already taking shape, came to inspire, strengthen, animate and guide the spirit and

Brazil said “goodbye” to one of the great protagonists of Liberation Theology: Bishop Pedro Casaldáliga, Bishop emeritus of São Félix do Araguaia who died on 8 August 2020.

Pedro Casaldáliga, born in Spain, in 1971, was ordained Bishop of the prelatore of São Félix do Araguaia, northern Brazil. At that time, it was evident that, at the level of Latin America, theology was subject to colonialism’s controlling influences. Based on the experience of Christians who had never strayed from the ideal life of the early Christian communities, a new way of being Church emerged: the Base Ecclesial Community. In this new way of being Church, at all levels, everyone is committed to creating a culture of communion and participation.



dynamism of these communities of faith and hope.

The pressing questions were: how to present God in a polarized world of rich and poor, where the relationship is one of injustice and exclusion? How to have an experience of God capable of bringing about change? How

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can the poor, the oppressed, the excluded, no longer exist as such?

The analysis of reality in light of the Word of God, makes it possible to discover the real causes of oppression and avoid idealism. "Following Jesus, the Jesus of the Bible, includes doing works of mercy, feeling compassion, praying for one another, participating in the Mass, but it is not enough ... just as it is not enough to explain the contradictory reality and let it remain as it is," said Gustavo Gutierrez. This was emphasized in one of the national seminars of the Ecclesial Base Communities (EBCs), held in the Diocese of Pelotas, during which I was introduced to the ring of tucum for the first time. Since then, it has accompanied me. It reminds me of Jesus' preferential option for the poor, and my commitment to follow the Jesus of the Bible. I also met Pedro at one of these EBC meetings. He was a man of faith. In everything and in everyone he recognized the

presence of God. He had a wooden cross on his chest and on his finger the ring of tucum. This was the symbol of his cause and the meaning of his struggle.

The tucum ring, historically speaking, was born in the time of the Empire of Brazil. While royalty used jewelry made of metals, precious stones and gold, blacks and Indians, without access to these materials, created the tucum ring. Tucum is a species of palm tree common in the Amazon. They made this rustic object a symbol of friendship, marital pacts and also of resistance in the struggle for liberation. In this way, the tucum ring was a symbol whose meaning only they knew: a secret symbol of their friendship and their daily struggles.

Later, Christians began to wear the tucum ring as a symbol of faith and commitment, especially with Liberation Theology. In the 1960s, when the call to take up the cause

of the poorest and most abandoned began to grow, not only in Brazil but also throughout Latin America, the use of the tucum ring came to be used by religious and non-religious who defended the protagonism and the inclusion of the most vulnerable in the society, as a sign of faith and commitment to social causes.

"This ring is made from a palm tree from the Amazon. It is a sign of the alliance with the indigenous cause and with popular causes. Whoever wears this ring declares that they have taken on these causes and the consequences ... Many, because of this commitment, faced death. Would you like to wear the ring?" Bishop Pedro Casaldáliga, 1994.

The Catholic Church of Brazil said goodbye to one of the great promoters of Liberation Theology. We will never say goodbye to his audacious and evangelical testimony, typical of the prophets who are not able to silence the cry for justice and peace.

J P I C

India Faces Water Crisis

S. Irene Sequeira

Province of Tanmaya - India

At this time it is fitting to recall the well-known quote from S.T. Coleridge's, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, where a sailor on a becalmed ship surrounded by the salt water sings:

"Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink."

In India we feel just what the protagonist of Coleridge's poetry felt. But, why do we have scarcity of water in India? During this summer Indians felt not just the pinch but the crunch of water scarcity. More than 21 major cities including Delhi, Bengaluru and Chennai felt the pain of water shortage. Many hotels and restaurants were closed because they could not provide water for

customers. With a population that is three times the size of the United States but having one-third the geographical area, India has the second largest population in the world.

It is said that India is suffering from the worst water crisis in its history and millions of lives and livelihoods are under threat.

India faces daunting water security challenges. The demands of a rapidly industrializing economy and urbanizing society come at a time

when the potential for augmenting supply is limited and water issues have increasingly come to the fore. While India hosts approximately 17 percent of the world's population, it holds only about four percent of the needed annual water resources.

In India, more than 600 million people are facing an acute water shortage. About three-quarters of households do not have a drinking water facility, and India ranks 120th among 122 countries in the water quality index. By 2030, India's water demand is expected to be double that of its supply which implies not only water scarcity for numerous people but also a loss of around 6 percent of GDP. This underscores the need for strategic interventions to promote water use efficiency, at both the micro and macro level. The formal work sector (government and corporations) is an important stakeholder in India's sustainability story. It also accounts for substantial water use. Various sectors of industry are competing



to use limited water resources that put pressure on the available supply of water and groundwater resources. The UN's World Water Assessment Program warns that lack of freshwater resources will have stark implications for economic prosperity and security.

John Kennedy once said that the person who could solve the world's water problem should receive two Nobel prizes: one for peace and the other for science. It has been said that the third world war will be over water, and it is at our gate and. Already, we have started experiencing internal water wars in some places, such as the long standing dispute

between two states of India concerning the Cauvery River. This has long affected social peace even with intelligent institutional interventions.

India urgently needs a white paper on water data – including the relationship between population growth, water availability and changing lifestyle, taking into consideration the variation in availability of water, boundaries of water basins, record of past and present rainfalls, and government efforts at privatisation, as well as the needs of farmers and irrigation infrastructure. This needs to take into consideration all of the Indian districts and it must be honest.

NEW SAINTS

S. Maria Gisela Bortolini	94	Brazil	09.07.2020
S. Genoveva Guidolin	94	Brazil	15.07.2020
S. Mary Rita Cullison	99	USA	18.07.2020
S. Marie Augusta Carle	95	France	20.07.2020
S. Mary Ruth Roy	90	USA	05.08.2020
S. Beatriz Ferraz Do Canto	85	Brazil	26.08.2020

Water Conservation Awareness

S. Sushanti Ekka

Province of Nagpur - India

Due to development and climate change, water crises are a growing problem all over the world. Many countries face some serious water shortage issues and India is one of them. In rural India 39.1% of women have to walk several kilometers in order to fetch water.

When this dreadful situation became highlighted in the news, the

students of St. Joseph's Convent girl's high school in Nagpur couldn't stand by without trying to make some change in the situation of water use. The school immediately formed a "Green Girls" committee composed of six 9th graders. These students were willing to work for change in the environment and still comply with their academic studies.

Soon the Green Girls came up with their very first project which was Ground Water Recharge on the campus of the school. The objective of the project was to conserve water and revive the ground water level.

For this, a 200 litre tank was placed near the entrance of the school garden and students were instructed to pour

the leftover water from their water bottles into the tank when leaving the school to return home. This water is utilized for gardening and other school purposes.

Up until March 2020 approximately 400 litres of water had been conserved by St. Joseph's Convent, part of the effort to strive constantly for the betterment in our environment. Soon the school will become a pioneer in environment conservation in the city.

We anticipate creating a photo blog on the school website to spread awareness around the globe and hope that this effort contributes to positive change and inspires other school to implement the same.



Racism - an ugly and shameful sin

S. Linda Pepe

USA

“Give me your tired, your poor,
your huddled masses
yearning to breathe
free...” These words of Emma
Lazarus, were inscribed in 1883 on
the base of the Statue of Liberty, and
promised freedom and equality to all
who sailed into the New York Harbor.
This grand lady was the first sight
many immigrants saw as they came
to the United States, a new land that
promised liberty and freedom from
oppression and violence.

“Lady Liberty” looks less grand and
less promising these days. Recent
events in our country have forced
Americans to face the ugly truth that
these words did not apply to those
living in our own country who were not
of the same cultural origin, economic
status, or skin color as the majority,
privileged and ruling class in the United
States.

Racism was, and to our shame, is
still very prevalent in the United States.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in his
“Letter from a Birmingham Jail” wrote
poignantly, “I have almost reached
the regrettable conclusion that the
Negro’s greatest stumbling block in
his stride toward freedom is not the
White Citizen’s Council or the Ku
Klux Klanner, but the white moderate,
who is more devoted to ‘order’ than
to justice...” I wonder what Dr. King
would think of our nation, and our



world today, as we witness peoples of
all sizes, shapes, and colors walking
together, finally awake to the violence
and injustices that exist in our society
and in societies around the world
that oppress and deny the rights of
others.

The death of George Floyd
awakened the conscience of a nation,
and of an entire world. Now the
question remains: do we keep the
momentum going and advocate for
serious change in our society, or do
we slip back into our apathy and seek
order more than justice?

Racism is an ugly sin and we need to
confront our own personal apathy
when it comes to speaking out
against racism. It is not easy to
confront racist remarks made by

friends or family, but undoing
racism is a long-term
commitment. It is not for the
faint of heart.

Racism connects to so
many other injustices –
environmental, LGBTQ+
discrimination, economic
disparities, and sexism, to
name but a few. Confronting
our own personal apathy
regarding racism may move
us to confront our apathy
regarding other unjust
systems.

It is shameful that we
must be reminded that
“Black Lives Matter.” During
this world wide pandemic,
as we look around and
see the faces of the first
responders, our doctors,
nurses, emergency medical

personnel, our store clerks, mail
persons, and so many, many more,
do we see color or do we see heroes?
People like these put their lives on the
line because we are all neighbors and
share a common humanity.

Racism will not go away by itself.
Silence and apathy are no longer
appropriate responses. Our faith
teaches us that Jesus stands with the
poor, the marginalized, those who
are persecuted and beaten – that is
say, with those in our world today who
are victims of racist oppression and
aggression.

Perhaps this entire article boils
down to this one simple message for
all of us to reflect upon. Regardless
of race, color, creed, gender identity or
economic status – We all matter!

Bolivia and the challenges of the pandemic

S. Francisca Dias de Medeiros

Bolivia

We, the Community of San Ramón, live 200 kilometres from the city of Trinidad, capital of the department of Beni. By decree of the President, we started lockdown in our country on March 21. In our city, we follow the rules strictly, only one person per family over 18 years old can go out (once a week and carrying their identity card) to buy food. People with chronic illnesses, children and the elderly do not go out. Everything was controlled by military guards.

On May 20, the first Covid-19 case was reported in San Ramón and on May 22 the first patient died. The tragedy started like this: after the death of the first patient, health professionals started to get sick, the hospital collapsed, the medicines in the pharmacies were depleted, there was no transportation, the hospital ran out of medicines and every day 2 to 3 people died. People despaired and food ran out. The city's top officials were infected and a 46-year-old officer died.

A city of 5,000 inhabitants, which reported deaths every day, was left without authorities, medicines, food, transport or financial services, as all the workers at the single bank were infected. We, with the help of



Sisters serving the community

friends, got some medicines to help the poor people, who had colds. We also shared with people the little food we had.

In the midst of uncertainty, we thought it would be opportune to contact the city authorities and suggest that they make a video asking help from the people. We did so and the video was made. This video was broadcast on social networks, television channels in the country, and other media. Thanks to this initiative, people organized “solidarity aid groups”. As a result, planes with medicines and personal protective equipment began to arrive at the hospital, as well as food for the poor. In the face of such an emergency, some groups in Cochabamba and Santa Cruz requested our collaboration to receive 19 drugs for Covid-19; with that, we opened a temporary “Solidarity Pharmacy”.

At that time, the city of San Ramón was declared a “health disaster”. Therefore, a group of volunteer doctors from Santa Cruz came to San Ramón to help. They made home visits to care for the sick in their homes. On the other hand, members of the ‘National State’ arrived in San Ramón with oxygen and food.

Since the beginning of the lockdown, we Sisters, the parish priest and some lay people have helped the poor in food campaigns. We have used social networks to find and organize aid. We also organized night vigils and prayer networks. We pray the rosary with the families, with the help of WhatsApp and Zoom. We accompany the families who lost their relatives by praying the novena of the deceased on Facebook.

In less than one month, 44 people died. There is no exact number of how many cases of Covid-19 are

there so far, because there is no proof. According to the doctors' report, 90% of the population had Covid-19.

After this period of suffering and anguish, the situation improved. Some patients are still in the process of

recovery. There are no more deaths by Covid-19 and the hospital is empty, but the lockdown continues, although less strict. We continue to deliver medicines and receive groups that distribute food to the poorest people in the city.

We are now dedicating ourselves to accompanying some people who have symptoms of post-Covid-19 depression. The struggle continues and challenges us to be ready to collaborate in this uncertain time.

The pandemic and its impact

S. Jayarani and other young Indian Sisters

France

Although we kept our distance from others during the Covid-19 pandemic, we were united in an emotional and spiritual sense: talking to elderly people who are living alone, being more interested in reading and learning about the events and decisions of the Church, the congregation and the country, as well as being in solidarity with all humanity as well as with nature.

This pandemic has helped us to take time to sit quietly and become more aware of ourselves. Men and women who were not very appreciated or recognized have become front-line workers: nurses, cleaners, delivery men.... We also see people who are kinder, more helpful, more attentive and more compassionate than at other times.

The challenges, emotions, struggles, death and life, all of this brings us closer to God. By watching Mass every day online and praying in our rooms, homes become the places of worship where the Body of Christ dwells.

We have realized that we need to be ready and flexible for all the

changes that life offers us. This pandemic has taught the world something about change and renewal. As the days went by, the virus was spreading all over the world and people were affected by this terrible virus and many died. Every minute the number of deaths was increasing.

Within us, a kind of anxiety set in and we felt that the world was coming to an end. But God, who created everything and everyone, wants us to return love to Him, in the sense that He is waiting for us.

Before the arrival of Covid-19, people could do whatever they wanted, but now they are no longer able to do many things, even we religious. God wants us to turn to Him. At this

time we can turn to Him and change our hearts and our old ways of life.

During this period of lockdown, we have discovered that at the heart of our being there is energy and vitality, a tremendous ability to stand up and walk towards the periphery.

Self-awareness and self-realization have emerged during this period, being ready to be planted where we are needed. Relying on grace and with the necessary courage, we leave our safety zone.

The zeal of the disciples after the resurrection of Jesus is, for every sister of St. Joseph, a call to start anew, ever more allowing the seed to break open, to germinate and to become a powerful bearer of life.



Sisters Jayarani, Sujata, Nirmal, Savita, Santhi and Sapna (left to right)

CSJ Missioni meets the Italian province

S. Rosalba Scaturro

Italy

On 26 April, when Europe was still in the midst of a pandemic emergency, CSJ Missioni asked for a meeting with all the communities of the Italian province. This event organized by the committee was held for the first time using the Zoom platform. It brought together the seven communities in Italy. We interviewed Francesca Sessa, a member of the Committee.

“How did the idea of a meeting with all the communities come about? What is the rationale?”

It was the first time for all the communities to meet together. Actually, CSJ Missioni had already met with individual communities starting last year, visits that we were hoping to finish this year, but the pandemic stopped us. Since the mission of CSJ Missioni is to address poverty - with Covid-19 - we asked ourselves what to do in response to this emergency which has also intensely affected Italy. Since the communities are filters to understand well the needs of a territory, we thought it good to “meet” with them. The process of the CSJ Missioni committee and the sisters in Italy getting to know one another better, which began last year, has accelerated and, because of social distancing, we proposed and used the online mode, which was more easily accepted, probably because it was the only one possible.

“How was the meeting?”

The meeting was very positive. We found that the communities were



already doing something in their area. We thought we had to encourage them, and we realized that it was enough to listen to them. To confirm this, we received two projects from communities that are trying to do something, but that need financial support.

“What projects are they?”

The projects came from the community of Pisa and the community of Ferentino (Frosinone). The community of Pisa supports a project whose leader is Caritas, which has established - also through the contribution of other institutions - a fund to support families in difficulty. These families are included in the list for state funds but are waiting to receive bonuses and going through difficult times. The community of Ferentino, on the other hand, proposes to support for a limited period of time, rental expenses to accommodate a mother-child nucleus, victims of violence. Domestic violence during the pandemic was an emergency, and the shelter managed by the cooperative with which the sisters work has no place for new clients. Both projects are under evaluation.

“This meeting may have helped to see CSJ Missioni not only as the promoter of the Panettoni campaign, but also as a catalyst, because it pushed the communities to dare

more, investing in the territory with projects...”

The aim of the visits was to introduce CSJ Missioni. The Panettoni campaign is a tool we use to support the hostel in Songea (Tanzania), but it is not all that CSJ Missioni does. In the midst of this emergency CSJ Missioni could not help but question itself. It supported Amatrice (in the province of Rieti) shortly after the earthquake of 2016, and it wants to do more now. This pandemic, therefore, has made it possible to speed up the path of knowledge of CSJ Missioni.

“Beyond the projects, as a committee, are you open to continue meeting communities?”

Re-reading the meeting of April 26th, we confirmed our desire that the relationship and involvement with the communities be a stable part of our working method. Forms and modalities can change, but what we would like is to “attend” to the communities. This is what we want, but it is not a real project, because we would like it to be shared by the communities first. Going back to the projects under evaluation, they will be concrete responses that will return to the communities. Now, what is needed is to have the human resources to support the projects in a structured way.

Indigenous health in Roraima

Esther Tello Ferrar (Pastoral Worker with the Indigenous)

Brazil

The indigenous population in the state of Roraima is going through a time of great fragility in this time of the Covid-19 pandemic. Roraima is divided into two health districts that serve eight indigenous groups (approximately 80 thousand persons).

The arrival of the pandemic had a major impact. Since the beginning, indigenous peoples have organized themselves to set up sanitary barriers, preventing the entry and exit of people and vehicles, in order to control traffic. They advise their relatives not to go to the city and stay in their communities. This action delayed the arrival of the virus. The first death was of a 15-year-old boy which was reported in April. From then on, it was seen that a large number of health professionals were infected. The indigenous health care centre as well as the General Hospital of Roraima, the only public hospital in the state, were the places of transmission for those who came to be treated even for other diseases.

Based on this case, we witnessed a chain of contagions and deaths that were not always visible, due to the scarce number of tests carried out in the indigenous area. The Special Secretariat for Indigenous Health

(SESAL) is unable to adequately address the high number of contagions among its professionals.

Another way of contracting the disease is through illegal mining, where it is estimated that 20,000 gold miners are working, with no control of any kind, without minimum safety conditions or care, and in constant and well-known confrontation with the indigenous people that come from the devastated forest, open land and contaminated rivers.



Indigenous people of Dorados



Macuxi Roirama a well-informed indigenous woman

April, May, June, July went by, taking the lives of relatives and friends who got sick and left us, many teachers, elders with ancestral knowledge, leaders, children ... all of them buried in the city in haste, without being able to have the death rituals that each people needs so that their dead can rest. This added another deep

suffering to the already distressing scenario of ignorance of the disease and the misinformation that arrives all the time through social networks. In addition to underreporting, as in the rest of the country, indigenous peoples have another factor against them: only indigenous people living in the indigenous area will be counted in the indigenous statistics, those who live in the city are counted in the general population statistics, hiding the real size of the drama.

Currently, the state of Roraima is distinguished by the decrease in cases of contagion and death, however the virus continues to create indigenous victims in the interior, even in the most isolated areas, so far reaching 1241 cases and 17 deaths, according to official data (July 2020).

However, indigenous people continue to organize and resist. They have lived through more than 500 years of attacks, epidemics and diseases and they have remained firm and believing in the strength of the people and their ancestors, who have granted this land for them to live and live fully in them.

Retreat center celebrates 25 years

S. Gisela Heitz

Denmark

A retreat in June 1995 marked the beginning of the retreat work of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Denmark.

Stella Matutina (“the morning star”), a house beautifully located at the Baltic Sea, has provided the sisters in Denmark with a place to relax and be refreshed since 1946. The fresh air, the garden with wonderful flowers and trees and the water that can be seen even from the dining room have always been a source of a healing for both sisters of the local community and those coming for re-creation. Since the mid-1990s the number of sisters was diminishing so that rooms in the house at Stella Matutina were available. “The empty space” opened up for creative ideas . . . To open the house for lay people who were seeking an atmosphere of silence and prayer was one of these ideas. Sr. Ansgaria Riemann had prepared herself by having completed a program in spiritual direction and was ready for a “startup”. It was an experiment - but “the signs of the time” clearly indicated a need and a movement of searching for God in the people of God in Denmark and Scandinavia. In summer 1995 the first step was done – a retreat with lay people and sisters took place at Stella Matutina. Ever since, the need and the programs have grown: individual guided Ignatian retreats are offered on weekends, and as five- and ten-day retreats. Twice a year a contemplative



The retreat center from the garden

retreat and a retreat with elements of meditative dance are offered. Today, five sisters in the region are trained in Ignatian spiritual direction; one of the team members has special training in contemplative prayer and meditative dance. These five form the team of directors, while the entire community in the house forms the retreat team. Together they take care of the spiritual and physical needs of the guests. On the occasion of the “Silver jubilee”, Malene Fenger-Grøndal, a journalist by profession, is preparing a book about the retreat work and the house. Malene has been a retreat guest at Stella Matutina herself. She has interviewed retreatants, including Kirsten Mikkelsen, an associate in the Region who for made her first retreat at Stella Matutina in 2005 (and is still coming every year), who recounts her experience:

“Prayer is so essential at Stella Matutina, but for a long time I really had a hard time finding words to pray. I was therefore very happy when I was introduced to the Ignatian way of prayer, especially the “Examen”, which is a daily loving reflective prayer, where (a little simplified) in the evening one can find peace, thank God, and pray to

be able to find God’s presence in the day that passed, and ask for God’s help for the challenges of tomorrow.”

To the question of what she especially appreciates during the retreat, Kirsten writes:

“The silence. The silence while we eat. The silence when we move about in the house and on the way to Mass, for evening prayer or to meet the spiritual director. Silence - and yet a silent approachability, when we meet. We are here because of the same longing and have the freedom to unfold in our own way. . . .”

Retreat guests come from all over Denmark, but also from other Scandinavian countries, especially Norway and Sweden. The retreat work is truly ecumenical, since the majority of the guests belong to other Christian denominations. The retreats are open to people, simply looking for God . . . and the work is done “Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam” - for “the greater glory of God”.

The celebration of the jubilee of the retreat center with sisters, volunteers and friends could unfortunately not take place in June because of the pandemic, but hopefully this can happen in June next year.

Indigenous peoples in Brazil and the Coronavirus

S. Gema Menegat

Brazil

The Dourados Indigenous Reserve in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul is composed of two villages: Bororó and Jaguapiru, one of the most populous reserves in the country, inhabited by the Guarani, Guarani Kaiowá, Guarani Nandeva and Terena ethnic groups. Due to the difficult current situation of the reserve, the indigenous people are looking for work in different sectors of the region. Thirty indigenous people got employment in a slaughterhouse in the city and contracted Covid-19 which spread to the villages in the municipality.

Due to the lack of basic sanitation and limited access to water, the people find it difficult to adopt the simplest measures to face the biggest health crisis in recent years, such as washing hands.

The first case was confirmed in Dourados Indigenous Reserve on May 13. Since then, 104 indigenous people

have contracted the disease, (data from the city hall on June 17) "Cases of Covid-19 started at the JBS factory (slaughterhouse)", says the chief. The virus spread quickly. Five days after the first case, thirty indigenous people tested positive. The Indigenous



Missionary Council (CIMI) published the statement on the same day denouncing the negligence of state and federal health agencies to curb community transmission of the disease.

The houses in the villages are very close, therefore isolation is impossible. The leaders requested help from the government officials: "We are facing

yet another massacre due to Covid-19 in our Tekohas (indigenous territories) and we appeal for our survival". In response, the Ministry of Health tried to isolate indigenous people who were Covid-19 positive at the Dourados Indigenous Health Care Centre (Casai), maintained by the federal government. Since the health care centre is overcrowded the indigenous people are quarantining in a house provided by the diocese of the city. CIMI, the Public Prosecutor's Office and other government agencies and religious institutions are monitoring and responding to the most urgent needs in the villages.

The situation is getting worse. More and more people are contracting the sickness. We do not have an exact number but there are more than 150 cases of Covid-19. Some are hospitalized. There were 4 deaths due to Covid-19. Health care is provided in public hospitals. The Federal hospital and the Municipal hospital have limited capacity and health care is in precarious situation.

S. Gertrudes Balestrini

Brazil

In the Rio das Cobras Indigenous Reserve in Nova Laranjeiras in the state of Paraná, there are eight Kaingang ethnic villages and three Guarani ethnic villages which embrace 896 families (clans). Among these populations, there are two positive cases of Covid-19. These Indigenous people are served by two government health care organizations, one from the

federal government (SESAI) and one from the state government (SESA).

White people have not entered the Reserve for four months, except for essential services. We are very apprehensive, as we know that serious things might be taking place there, but we have neither information nor access. This is a very sensitive moment for the indigenous people. In addition, they depend on the federal government for their sustenance. They receive very little help from the State or the Municipality.

The municipality of Nova Laranjeiras was one of the last in the state of Paraná to register cases of the pandemic. However, the number of Covid-19 cases are high and are increasing. The people of the city are afraid of the proximity of the people of the Reserve. Since the indigenous population is over three thousand, they have to go for their health care services to a bigger city which is 114 km away, because the nearby Health Care centre, which is 20 km away, has only a few beds.

Logo of the 2021 General Chapter

International Communication Commission

The logo of the 2021 General Chapter, like any meaningful logo, is open to many interpretations. It is a visual expression of the Chapter theme: *Community Immersed in the Spirit Connected with the World*. The logo proclaims in imagery who we are and who we desire to be. The words of the theme are an integral part of the logo since they complete the circle while not closing it in on itself but leaving spaces and openings for life and meaning to flow in and out. The circle, which has no beginning nor end, points to the oneness and integrity of creation, of the universe, of which we are part and for which we have responsibility.

The light which shines through the three figures, symbolizes both the Spirit who is the source of life and the effect of the Spirit's presence

in the community. The three figures represent both the community and the Trinity. The community is joined as one but with each person being different. We are called to live this unity in diversity in community, both that of our congregation and that of the society in which we are immersed.



The three figures are immersed in the divine presence but have their feet firmly planted in the world and the different realities, as seen in the five colors, often used to indicate five continents with their diverse cultures.

The figures emanate joy with their arms raised in dance, together attuned to the music of the Spirit, each moving individually with their own steps yet following the same music together, similar to how we live in community and mission, guided by our charism.

When we look to the inspirational text from the Acts of the Apostles, used in designing the theme and logo, we see many of the same ideas. "The

community of believers was of one heart and one mind, and no one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they had everything in common. With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great favor was accorded them all." Acts

4:32-33

The unity of the early Christians was not grounded in some organizational structure but in oneness of heart and soul, given them by the Spirit. This oneness of heart and soul can be seen in the single-hearted desire of the first Christians to be the living Word of God, a challenge that we continue to embrace today, always seeking to be a prophetic and unifying presence for all.

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