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# CSJOURNAL

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry

September - October • Year 2020 - n . 5



## GENERAL COUNCIL

# Transformation requires taking risks

**S. Sally M. Hodgdon**

*General Council*

As I looked at the glimmering pool of water, I watched a colorful leaf fall from a tree into the pool and immediately be carried away in a dance of currents created by the moving water. This caused me to reflect on all that we are living in the political and cultural lives of our various societies today. All leaders, be they political, religious or business, call the people to transformation in one way or another. Transformation involves “changing our colors”, letting nature in the case of leaves, or God’s grace and our openness in the case of humans, work in and through us. Often, like leaves, we hold onto the “color” we feel most comfortable being. We cling tightly to the branch, waving in the wind and battered by the rain, in order not to change more than we already

have, hoping to stay where we are most comfortable.

Whether you are living in a location that is now in the autumn



season, as I am, or in the spring season, where buds are being nurtured to change and to risk opening up, the call to transformation is all around us. Letting go and not holding tightly to our “usual” way of being...the “old” normal, is one of the transformative calls surrounding each of us in this time of the Covid-19 pandemic, a pandemic that continues to be part of our daily lives.

We need to fully let go, like the

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falling leaf or the opening bud, in order to live in this time which challenges us to think deeply about what is the new truth we are called to live as women religious and committed Christians. Leaders of all persuasions are constantly speaking “their truth” and asking us to believe them, even when their words are in direct opposition to their own lives or in conflict with proven scientific thought, our belief system, or what we know by personal experience. These leaders offer no new paths leading to fullness of life for all. We all can be caught up in these same currents of narcissism, ignorance and power-seeking at times.

The new truth we are called to live now, and in the coming months and

years, is that we can no longer allow the poorest in our nations to be battered disproportionately by a global virus, or by a political party or a president or a prime minister. Our response to stand with the poor must be coherent with the Gospel call to share all that we have been given with those who have less. As a congregation, both our JPIC Commission and Interculturality Committee have helped us to raise our awareness of how we misuse our natural resources, such as water, and have increased our awareness of what it means to be open to respectfully live with and appreciate different cultures. Like the leaves we have been called to risk changing our “colors”, our behaviors,

our patterns of waste and bias, allowing the bud to burst forth to new life. Like the currents moving the leaves around in the pool, we are surrounded by the strong currents of others’ thoughts and we must not allow ourselves to just float along, but rather we need to risk living our own beliefs, living with less security and comforts, calling forth and modeling changes in lifestyle. We need to work for the same changes in the political sphere and in our own religious communities, so that decisions are made that reflect integrity, transparency and truth and God’s desire for sustainable life for humans and all of creation. What “color” will such a transformation bring to each of us then?

## J P I C

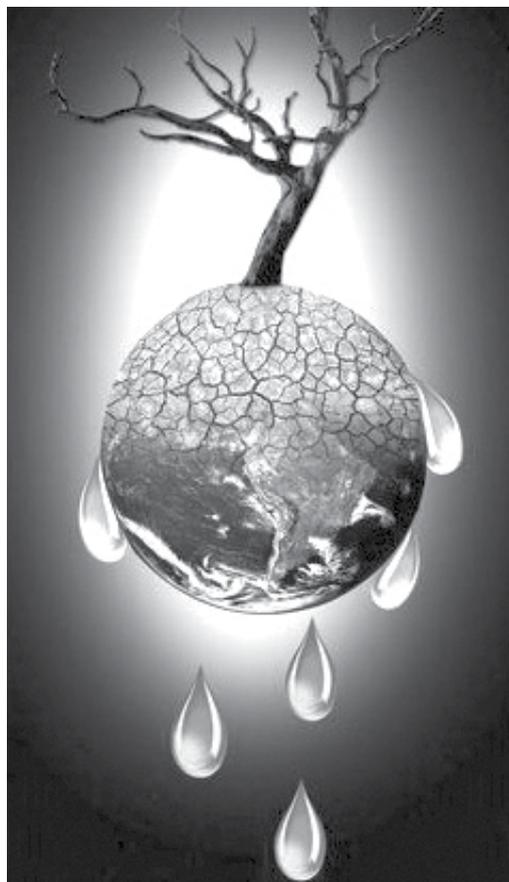
# Water is Life... Treat it Right

**Srs. Archana and Priyanka**

*Province of Tanmaya - India*

**W**ater is a precious gift of God on the earth. Life exists on the earth because of the availability of water. Itself being tasteless, odorless and colorless, it adds taste, color and a pleasant smell to the life of living beings on the earth. It is found everywhere and known as “life”. It takes nothing from us but gives life to us. It has no shape but takes the shape of the container in which it is kept. We find it everywhere: in rivers, seas, tanks, wells, ponds, but here we lack clean drinking water. Three-fourths of the earth is water, yet we need to conserve water as there is a very small percentage of clean water.

No water, no life! So it is our



responsibility to conserve this life nectar, possible only by changing our outlook towards this wonderful natural resource. We must ensure there is no pollution of water bodies by dumping into them any waste such as sewage, effluents, and other toxic substances.

We all are well aware of saving water in Tanmaya. It was a golden chance for us to practice what we had decided regarding saving the water. In regard to collecting rain water, it is ten years since we have a rain water harvesting system, where the water is collected, then filtered and sent to the well for its replenishment. Each one of us is very careful in using water for bathing, washing and for other activities personally.

We are collecting the waste water from washing clothes, utensils and bathing and it is used

to water the field and the garden. We also had readings on articles about saving water which enlightened us and brought more awareness about the importance of water in our day-to-day lives. Ever since we had to struggle to have enough water in the summer of 2019, we just cannot imagine one's life without water. We had to buy tankers of water, not only for the use of the

house but also to keep the fruit bearing trees of our garden alive. Seeing the urgent need of water we decided to have an open well of 60 feet (20 meters), and God blessed us with plenty of water in it.

Water is one of the greatest necessities for living on earth but unfortunately we have forgotten this fact and continuously consume it without thinking of the future. We should

understand the importance of water in our life and stop misusing it, moving toward the proper management of water usage. We should also protect clean water from becoming unusable due to soil or water pollution. We should not waste and store rain water for use in toilets.

Conserve Water..... Every Drop Counts.....

# Growing in Love with Nature

## S. Mukti Ekka

*Province of Nirmala - India*

**“As I walk, the universe is walking with me . . . Beauty is on every side”.** Traditional Navajo Prayer.

We are surrounded and enveloped by Nature. It wakes us up every morning; birds with their melodious voices open our eyes and convey the message of new dawn and new life. Nature rings the alarm for us. Nature with its goodness makes our morning hours so peaceful, calm, fresh and lift us to be in union with the Creator, the life giver. Each day Nature teaches us to live our lives meaningfully and joyfully.

Leo Tolstoy tell us: “One of the first conditions of happiness is that the link between humanity and Nature shall not be Broken”. Nature is the best book for us to learn and experience being in touch with our inner self and with God. It provides all times and various types of food, both physically and spiritually. The more time we spend with nature, the more we tend to love nature. Being with nature, surrounded by nature, living in nature, creates closeness to God the Creator and God’s creation.



*The three sisters (Carmela Tigga [L], Mukti Ekka [C], Ursela Naretti [R]) with the children at Asha Kiran*

As individuals, communities, provinces, regions and congregations, we are very closely in touch with creation. Also JPIC has given a strong impetus in regard to nature and its various aspects. As individuals and as communities we have spent a lot of time praying, reflecting, sharing and organizing events on the various issues of climate change. This has enlightened and motivated us to truly love nature, take care, and to be co-creator.

In the words of Jane Goodall, “What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make”. As a

community here, we the sisters and residents (children living with HIV) are drawn to make our campus better than yesterday by giving our best towards helping nature “GO-GREEN”. I feel glad and proud to share our experiences in taking care of nature and becoming co-creators. Within a year we have worked hard digging and preparing the ground to plant new saplings, flowers and grow vegetables, too. During the three months of May- August 2020, besides flower gardens and vegetables, we have put down 370 saplings in and around the campus. Today after a year of our presence here in this ministry of caring

for children with HIV, it gives us much joy and excitement to see the barren land “GO-GREEN” with plants, flowers and vegetables. Our joint efforts and the passion to care for Mother Earth, has added color and brought new life into our ministry in spite of the Covid- 19 pandemic.

Today we find happiness in nature that connects us with the creator God. We experience a difference now, breathing in fresh and pure air and thanking God for the colorful panorama in and around Asha Kiran Rehabilitation Centre at Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, India.

I conclude with the words of Pope

Francis, “If the simple fact of being human moves people to care for the Environment of which they are a part, Christians in their turn realize that their responsibility within Creation, and their duty toward nature and the Creation, are essential part of their Faith”. (Laudato Si 64).

## PROVINCE/ REGION/ MISSION

# Mozambique – A Glorious Land

**Srs. Eliane Costa Santana,  
Maria Inez Leite Ramos  
and Vilma de Oliveira**

*Brazil*

Since the beginning of the mission in Mozambique, the Sisters have always been involved in the formation of leaders, in the guidance of different groups and in the commissions of the diocese. In Mocimboa da Praia, there were no missionaries or priests for many years. In addition to the pastoral work, the Sisters undertook other projects, in partnership with the government and Diocesan Caritas to help malnourished children, people with AIDS, community farming in the villages. They also gave guidance to the young girls who became pregnant early, women with difficulties in families and tutored the students and taught crafts and preventive health care to the people.

As time passed, the sisters saw the people’s need for water. Hence in partnership with the Congregation and friends they engaged in a project to build a cistern to alleviate people’s suffering.

In addition, projects to raise pigs, goats and chickens and begin a community vegetable garden for the self-sustainability of families were also begun.

Amid so many inequalities and the many defenceless children and elderly, the Sisters carried out a nutritional project with the help of local resources, using the method of the pastoral care of children as is common in Brazil. Home remedies and enriched flour were developed to strengthen sick and malnourished children and elderly.

As time passed, other needs arose and other sisters came to help. An urgent need was a school for children 4 to 6 years of age. Hence a community school was built. The children would come to the school first to get something to eat, then learn Portuguese and come in contact with another world. Above all, they received affection, attention and love. What a joy to see the seeds that were sown growing strong and vibrant.

To our surprise, in 2017, on October 5, the entire population woke up to the sound of firearms. This was the first record of the attack in Cabo Delgado Province, and Mocimboa



*Sr. Maria Inez with a child from the community*

da Praia. Armed men terrorized the village of Mocimboa da Praia and then went to the villages of the District and started attacking and sowing fear and destruction among all the people. With the destruction of the villages, Vila became a refuge for families. Realizing the need of the people, the parish Caritas sought ways to face this challenge. They distributed seeds so that

people could engage in agriculture and gave academic support to the displaced children. We, the Sisters, engaged in formal education and the development of community radio which gave an opportunity for young people and children to develop programs.

After a while, everything seemed to be going well. However, at dawn on March 23, 2020, the Vila was attacked again from all directions. The insurgents and the military fought for five days. During this period, our house was open to receive people fleeing the war and we sheltered 67 more individuals. After that, the attacks between the military and insurgents' groups became more intense and frequent and continued till the

months of June and July. Each day the war became more fierce in our region.

During this horrible reality Srs. Maria Inês and Eliane remained and gave witness to their faith and hope as true Sisters of St. Joseph - not running away from the struggle when the people are most in need. Our house became a place of welcome, shelter and protection for all who fled from the war hungry, thirsty, and cold, because they had lost everything. On August 12, our house was invaded by 30 men armed with machine guns in search of members of the military. They thought the Sisters were hiding the military in their house. At the time of the invasion, the Sisters were able

to help the people who were with them to escape. Only the two sisters, a woman with a new-born child, two girls and a disabled elderly woman remained in the house.

The house was inspected and looted. The Sisters were taken with the women and children to a camp and released finally on September 6, 2020.

The mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph is to be with the neediest and suffering people seeking to be faithful to the project of the Kingdom of God. The time in Mozambique has certainly contributed to invigorate the communion of prayers and strengthen our missionary spirit in the mission entrusted and embraced.



*Sisters Vilma and Eliane during a celebration in a community*

## NEW SAINTS

Sr. Irene Ferraz Pellegrini	86	Brazil	31.08.2020
Sr. Rose Sendeski	96	France	08.09.2020
Sr. Marie-Cyprien Bochard	100	France	25.09.2020
Sr. Marie-Renée Ract Mugnerot	93	France	20.10.2020

# A life-giving network for Europe

**S. Maria Cristina Gavazzi**

*Italy*

“On behalf of the Core Group (Sisters Jona, Maria Cristina and Marianne) together with the preparatory commission formed by Sisters Sally, Mariaelena and Piluca, I would like to welcome each of you to this meeting which was supposed to take place in Stella Matutina, but which is now being held by ZOOM. We miss the opportunity of seeing each other’s faces and we miss the informal conversations during breaks, meals and evenings. Our lives have become less social and more isolated. But each one of us is behind the screen, and we thank you for participating in this manner”. With these opening words, Sister Marianne Bode (Denmark) officially opened the fourth meeting of European leaders held via ZOOM from August 26 to 29.

As we well know, the current pandemic has presented new challenges. It asks us questions about how to care for our elderly sisters, our sisters in initial formation, our ministries, and our leadership. The whole situation poses questions about how we want to live our mission as Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry in Europe. Are we still self-sufficient in our PRM or do we see a possible collaboration in Europe today?

Since this meeting in August 2020 was supposed to be the last face-to-



face meeting before the 2021 General Chapter, the General Council offered us the possibility of a facilitator (Sister Piluca Benavente Serrano, MSOLA) to help us find a structure, a network of effective collaboration, a network that does not add to the structures already existing in the provinces and regions, but that will facilitate the process leading to the creation of a single European province in the future.

At the end of four days of meeting, the result obtained is encouraging and promising: a European Network involving all the sisters, organized through meetings (via ZOOM or face to face) of the provincials and coordinators of the regions, provincial/regional councils together, new members, middle-aged sisters and elderly sisters. This European network will be animated by a Core Group (with role and functions still to be defined) and will be made up of

an initial formation commission, the contact persons of the ICC and JPIC, and the leaders of the different groups of Associates. The question of whether or not to maintain a permanent formation commission at the European level remains open.

Further ways of networking were also foreseen through support and collaboration in the mission and with a common missionary project. The missionary presence continues in France, among the communities of the PRM, among the retreat centers with programs open to sisters and lay people of Europe, and among the sisters who are involved in vocation ministry.

The network was created with a clear vision and shared by all leaders. The next step, at the beginning of November, will be to give concrete form to this network, establishing roles and functions, to be presented at the General Chapter 2021.

It was inspiring how we worked together on Zoom even in group work. I missed the face to face communication, but when this is not possible, we have just to continue by Zoom. - Marit (Norway)

Even though it was virtual, I still found that our gathering was very important for strengthening our relationship among the leaders. I felt that there were common shared interests for more life giving in the future. - Jona (France)

It was a joyful meeting, full of hope for a common future of CSJ in Europe; there is the readiness to commit ourselves to walk together, to join our corporate life. - Gisela (Denmark)

Looking together for possible ways for our Europe . . . gave me confidence and encouraged me to live this meeting of European women leaders with openness. - Alessandra (Italy)

For me it was enriching being together again, seeing, talking, sharing. Although it was on Zoom. I believe that it helped us to move forward together . . . - Anette (Norway)

# Celebrating Eucharist during Covid-19

## S. Rose Marie Dubay

USA

Here in the United States, although the churches are now open to welcome some people to celebrate the Eucharist, the number that can participate is very limited and those who live in homes for the elderly cannot leave their building to join the community, even if they would like to do so. In many provincial houses and care homes, in order to maintain safe distancing and avoid the possible spread of Covid, the residents are not permitted to eat together in the dining room but must stay in their rooms. Here in West Hartford, we are lucky enough to be able to eat together while keeping a distance. Yet, since maintaining the required distance would not be possible in the chapel, for many months our participation in the Eucharist has been limited to watching the Mass on TV.

Recently the television Mass was celebrated by an older priest, who most probably had suffered a stroke, but this did not prevent him from saying a most beautiful and joyful Mass ever experienced. His goodness and love reflected in each of his grand gestures

gave the impression of one filled with God's love and wonder. His short homily expressed the fullness of God's grace and abundance given to him as he lovingly embraced his infirmities. What this priest lacks in his crippled body did not prevent him from expressing what he holds in

a heart full of love for God. What a marvelous expression of one who is filled with gladness and amazement for a God whom he knows has loved him throughout his life!

How touching it was when the priest prayed for all those in nursing homes, the place in which he probably resides. This priest's aging with infirmities brings to mind the decline of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as that of the many congregations of women and men religious – the dying of a way of life that was a vibrant asset of the mission of the Church. Is this what lies on the horizon for dedicated religious in the Church?

This seems to be our life experience here at Sedgwick Cedars, the provincial house and residential care



*Sr. Rose Marie Dubay at her computer*

home for the sisters who need some assistance – a life of religious women stumbling along with walkers and canes while living the daily sameness of life. But, as observed at the recent Mass, I believe that the priest has learned that acceptance of disabilities and diminishment with a loving and gracious heart and with an awareness of God's deep and abiding love for him gives him the strength and determination to make each day the best that can be ever lived. I pray that God grant us a peace that sustains us in all our endeavors, resulting in an expression of God's love and joy shown to one another throughout each day, and that we, too, with all our infirmities and disabilities ask for the grace to make each day the best that we can ever live.

# Feet in the Amazon - A Missionary Cut Off

**S. Talita Angélica da Silva Santos**

*Brazil*

Since March 6, 2020, I have been part of the inter-congregational mission in Boa Vista do Cuçari, Pará. I confess that after having suffered two retinal detachments, cataracts and some eye surgeries that gave me visual limitations, I had lost hope of working here as a missionary. But when my heart was peaceful, I received with joy the proposal to be here, to come to the Amazon. Excitement, gratitude and great love flooded my being.

However, who expected a pandemic? On March 19, we began our social isolation. I, who had come with the desire to “explore” the Amazon, to see its beauty, hear its sounds, navigate its waters, walk on its ground, be with the people, would stay at home ... Stay at home, but not alone! I had a community of sisters who were unknown to me: Sr. Ana Clara, Sr. Ignês and Sr. Jane. What a precious gift to live with them, to see the rhythm of each one, to talk without haste, to learn the mission in this reality through their sharings. I can say that I was introduced to the mission and the pastoral work through sharing at table and the celebration of the daily Eucharist. I immediately remembered the kitchen of our first sisters, the great mystery of Jesus’ 30 years in Nazareth: in everyday life and in the simplicity of things Jesus was learning to be human and I was learning to be an Amazonian missionary.

The mission was opening up in other ways too, such as accompanying people online, sharing the Gospel and



*The community in a boat with others: S. Ana Clara Covino (Cuneo),  
Ignes Cristina Malinoski (Chambery), Rita Evejania dos Santos and  
Talita Angelica da Silva (Istituto, Italy)*

the maxims of Fr. Médaille through WhatsApp and producing materials to be shared on social networks. The internet became an environment for sharing new missionary horizons and that’s how we discovered possibilities even with our limited internet and electricity.

Online competitions were held for youth, where groups got involved and produced very rich materials. We held meetings with the local church, producing videos where we shared our congregational history and collaborated in the preparation of free books on the theme of the Amazon Synod. In order to be close to the local leaders, we produced videos at different occasions such as Easter, Laudato Sí Week and Consecrated Life Week, overcoming our technical limitations and discovering our gifts in front of the cameras.

We celebrated with the youth the day of Consecrated Life, with a vigil following all the health recommendations! And we organized two vocational meetings, which taught

us that our mental schemes need to adapt to the reality of the Amazon: unhurried, not too early, with small drops that make you thirstier rather than giving a jug of water to quench your thirst at once. And, when it became possible, we met with the local leaders for prayer, sharing and motivating them to resume pastoral activities. The pandemic sharpened our creativity! It is impossible not to be upset at the threatened, neglected, forgotten life of the people, of nature and Creation. The mission calls, pulsates and invites us to give the best we can with things that are so simple.

The Amazon cries out, welcomes, gives, in sharing, in the missionary availability of these people, who though initially suspicious, can only say yes to the Evangelization project. It calls for missionaries willing to donate their smallness, just like me, who recognize that they are only collaborators in building the Kingdom of God.

# Cross Cultural Experience in Tanzania

**S. Naina Javed**

*Pakistan*

On the 14th of March 2020 I left Pakistan on my missionary journey to Tanzania - Songea, Mateka for my cross-cultural experience preceding final vows. Although I was to return home in June, the Covid-19 pandemic extended my stay until September 4. When I arrived in Songea I was heartily and warmly welcomed by Sr. Josiane (Brazil), Sr. Nilza (Brazil) Sr. Valesca (Brazil), Sr. Malathi (India), Sr. Carmeline (India) and Sr. Marian (Ireland).

For me it was the mystery of God, because exactly two days later everything was closed, as well as our St. Joseph's Mission Centre, because of Covid-19. But life didn't stop. From Mateka community I went to Msalaba Mkuu, a village where I gave some classes in Mathematics, basic computer and spiritual reading to candidates Rita and Martina. Every culture has its own riches, behaviors, language, food and social system so it was an immense challenge for me to learn their language. I had some classes in "Kiswahili" given to me by Miss Kitut "greetings", Sr. Valesca "grammar" and Miss Sarah "conversation". Here in Tanzania the people are very friendly, responsive and excellent in greetings.

I also visited the families within the two villages "Hunga and Msindo" with Sr. Josiane. The people were very affectionate, tender, hard working, and very generous. Most of them are farmers, selling vegetables and fruits in the market to have money to provide for their children.

Having to go outside to draw



*Sr. Naina by a tree in Tanzania*

water challenged me to reflect on my commitment, especially the vow of poverty and a deep heart for the poorest of poor. On the 23rd of May after having a very deep experience of "Laudato Si week" which made me aware that everything is connected. I moved back to the Mateka community. By June 1st all the schools and our St. Joseph's hostel were reopened, to welcome 61 girls who attend different schools. I was involved in all aspects of the hostel where the girls have sufficient time for studying with extra tuition in History and Mathematics where I did my part by giving successful classes to form 1 and form 3 (Grade 8 and 10). At the Centre the girls cultivate their leadership potential by taking some responsibilities which helps them prepare for their bright future.

On the 14th of June Sr. Malathi and I visited the Nasuli Secondary School

- form 6 (Grade 12) in Namtubo for vocation promotion. We had a pleasant and challenging experience with these girls. On the 21st of July I shared the history, culture and current situation of Pakistan in Mahinya college with 38 adult students. They were very responsive, asking questions and clarifications about Pakistan. I also spent time with the kindergarten children and had the opportunity to go to Peramiho to see the first Benedictine missionary priests' church, hostel, carpentry and book shops and a museum of Tanzania.

This cross-cultural exposure transformed my life. It was a time to be re-born again. In an international community I experienced acceptance, flexibility and openness as well as dedication to the mission. It encouraged me to grow more in the missionary life, sensibility towards others and creation. I strongly felt "a call within a call".

# Only the Sisters remain

**Monika Forsslund**

*Parish Council and Caritas  
Sankt Olof, Sundsvall, Sweden*

**“P**ästerna de komma och gå,  
endast systrarna bestå ...”  
 (“The Fathers come and go  
only the Sisters remain ...”)

This is how Mrs. Monika summed up the presence of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the parishes of Northern Sweden:

As I glance through the memories of the 50s and 60s, what do I see? I see a very small Parish in a large area which responds to the needs of the entire North, that is to say half of the entire Country. I also see only one priest serving, arriving in an old Volkswagen.

Then my memories go to the

1970s and 1980s; the arrival of the priests of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, who are serving only half of the northern region.

Luleå and Umeå became parishes, each with its own parish priest. But what's new is the presence of the Sisters of St. Joseph. In the 70s-80s we had the joy, here in Sundsvall, of welcoming the Sisters of St. Joseph, who have contributed to the development of this parish. They have worked especially for the welfare of youth, children and families.

From the 90s, the parish developed even more, thanks to the arrival of Sisters Lila and Beatriz. Many Fathers have come and gone, but you, Sisters, remain. The presence of the sisters here was and is very significant. One cannot imagine how important their presence is.

In addition to continuing to be a great support for the parish priest, the sisters teach catechism to the children and youth, visit the families and the sick, participate in prayer groups, give

retreats, Bible study, etc ...

The turmoil and wars in the world have also left a trail here in the North of the country. Exiled families from Chile came here in the 1980s; from 1990 families from Bosnia, the Philippines and Africa have been coming and it goes without saying that families persecuted in Iraq have found refuge here.

And you, Sisters Beatriz and Lila, have been around all the time to help, support, encourage, pray and also to solve practical problems. You felt the need to open a local group of Caritas in which you, together with others, fought to give these people new life and security as much as possible.

Anyway, not to be too long, you are the pillars and continuity of our parish. You, Sisters of St. Joseph, are a source of inspiration for us.

We, the Caritas group and representatives of the parish, are very grateful to you, Sisters of St. Joseph, for all that you are to us and all that you do for us. We pray that God may keep you for many, many years to come.



*Fiesta of nations*

# Coronavirus shapes election by Google Forms

## S. Navya Neelamvilail

*Province of Pachmarhi – India*

On 13 September, 2020, the sisters of the Province of Pachmarhi, India, elected the Chapter Preparatory Committee online. The Provincial Leadership Team: Sisters Annies Padayattil (Provincial), Navya, Rohini and Shobha (Councillors) waited with their fingers crossed till the voting was over. The reason is that it was the first time the election of a team was done online in the province, though with the permission from the General Team.

The list of names of the sisters eligible to be elected to the Chapter Preparatory Committee were entered in Google Docs.

This form was then sent to all the communities from the e-mail of the Provincial Leadership Team. Every sister of the province had to check mark four sisters of her choice from that list, using  on the Google Doc.

Knowing the fact that some sisters of the province might not manage to do this task online, the

e-mail with the Google Form was sent to the community's e-mail. If there were six sisters in a community, each of them was to submit a response individually with a total of six responses from that community. The Provincial Team waited together at one computer to check the responses coming in, and at the end of it, the number of responses tallied with the number of sisters in the province. During the process, Google keeps showing the responses coming in and tallies the responses as they come in. Within an hour the voting was over.

Since an online election was going to be done for the first time, after the convocation of the Provincial Chapter of May 2021 on 8 September the sisters of the province were given a demonstration of the voting process through Zoom screen sharing. Once again, there was a practice for the communities before the real day of voting by sending out a mock name-list and asking the sisters of the

province to fill in and submit the forms to ensure that everything worked well.

Thus, on the real day, the voting went off fast and was a complete success. The number of responses and the number of sisters voting tallied. The Provincial Team announced the results on the same day. Sisters Alice Abraham, Francis Joseph, Lilly Padayattil and Sunanda Tete were elected as the Committee members.

It was thanks to the coronavirus that we thought about a different way of voting for the Committee members. If it had been done in the usual way and sent from the communities by post to the Provincial Team, it would have taken a minimum of 15 days for all the ballots to arrive, if this were a normal situation without the coronavirus. Given the pandemic, it would have taken almost a month. The coronavirus is slowly but surely making us invent new ways of communicating and living in our world.



# Back to Classes Post Pandemic

**Large de Godoy**  
**(Vice-director St. Joseph School)**

*Brazil*

**W**ith the onset of social distancing which began six months ago, the educational system faced a lot of challenges. They carried out the work by reinventing themselves, overcoming obstacles and, overnight, changing from classroom teachers to virtual teachers. The teachers entered the homes of the students virtually and students gladly allowed them to come in to their homes, to build a new way of teaching and learning together.

During this period St. Joseph School in Caxias worked hard, organized and prepared the environment to get back to the school in person. We planned together for the personal contact in our school, giving priority to the safety and protection of employees and students.

With the Protocol built, instruction and training was given to the entire educational community, since everyone is involved and called to commit themselves to this project of individual and collective care. The Protocol contains, in addition to an explanation about COVID-19, the rules of social coexistence for this atypical moment.

The pandemic has challenged us to rewrite the history of St. Joseph School, which has existed for 120 years. A new way of being an educator will be recorded in our register, reinforcing rules and reinventing ways to maintain excellence in what we do: to do our best at this time and educate for life. Therefore, we cannot shun our commitment nor ignore this new time.

This new way of being an educator has challenged us to use technology, which is a tool to facilitate communication and share knowledge. It has helped us to improve our skill in using technology. These tools have come to stay, and though they were used before, now they will assume a new dimension in the classroom and outside the classroom, as allies with the teacher.

Even in the face of this new reality, activities, projects, celebrations and formative training did not stop, because technology has been an anchor to animate the journey, generate hope and create opportunity for closeness, and thus has brought a sense of belonging and commitment to the



School, because we know that the lack of human contact was one of the elements felt most deeply during this time of social isolation.

With the grace of God and the protection of St. Joseph, we continue to stand firm in our purpose, overcoming difficulties and believing in unity as an element of strength, certain that tomorrow will be better and that the lessons learned at this moment will help us to become more human and confident in divine providence.

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