

Danish

**English**

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# CS JOURNAL

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry

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## GENERAL COUNCIL

## SUMMARY

### OUR SYNODAL JOURNEY

**Sr. Dolores Lahr**

*General Council*



Pope Francis announced in March 2020 that the next synod of Bishops at the Vatican would have as its theme: “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission.” Synodality, which literally means “walking together,” has become a key topic of Pope Francis’ pontificate, but one which has raised questions and even confusion.

In some parts of our Church, news of this type of a synod was met with great expectations, high hopes and openness on the part of bishops and laity. Other parts of our Church received this news somewhat half-heartedly. And so

the journey began.

The first phase called for clergy and laity to meet, raise issues and concerns, and most importantly, to listen to one another. The first phase, known as the ‘continental phase,’ involved churches around the world, and the recently released “Working Document” is the result of a group reflection on the syntheses submitted to the Vatican by Bishops’ Conferences and Oriental Catholic Churches on the questions raised during the local and national listening sessions, plus reflections from the men’s and women’s international unions of superiors general,

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(USG and UISG), lay groups and others. One thing is absolutely clear: the synod has raised in the local churches a great desire to continue the path of synodality, to continue to walk forward together, and not to return to what has been.

The logo and accompanying Scripture passage for the Working Document – “Enlarge the space of your tent” (Is 52:4) – is one that we, Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry, are familiar with, having referenced it in past Chapters.

The image of the tent as a space of communion, participation and mission is powerful – and at the same time, very challenging. It is not a question of will we, as an international Congregation, widen our tent, for we must. But how will we widen our tent? And when we do widen our tent, how will we welcome those who are waiting to come in? How will we find – and welcome, and integrate – those partners, those companions on our journey? It is most important not to

leave anyone on the outside, questioning their welcome. Synodality is all about journeying together. And in that journey, we must be open to being converted, to being transformed.

As I reviewed and reflected on the document, I was struck by the many times the word ‘listen’ was used, and I was reminded of a quote attributed to Saint Benedict, wherein he tells us to ‘listen with the ears of our hearts.’ That experience encompasses our whole being, body, mind, and spirit, and that is the call to true discipleship, to listen deeply, to be open to the other, to the whispers of the Spirit that may come in a surprising way.

Our sisters and lay partners are challenged to listen deeply. Within our Congregation, we must listen to one another, our elderly, our members in the middle, and our younger members. We must listen to our lay partners – what are they telling us? We must listen to our local Churches – what message is being spoken there? And we

must listen to the realities of our world – where is our call to communion, participation, and mission? Where is the living out of our charism most needed?

Dialogue is the partner to listening. How do we work together to develop a culture of listening and dialogue among our sisters and lay collaborators? It is only after we have realized the capacity to listen and dialogue that we can whole-heartedly embark on our synodal journey. And this synodal journey is a call, a challenge to be transformed, transformed into people who live a culture of synodality.

I am certain that we must widen our tents, respond to the calls, to the cries of the people of God for inclusion. I am also convinced that our tent must, in turn, be joined with the tents of others on the journey. In concert with the universal Church, we have embraced synodality and the synodal journey, knowing that the Synodal journey is just that, a journey that has begun, not an event in the life of our Church that is once and done.

# WOMEN'S PROTESTS IN IRAN: WHY DO THEY CONCERN US?

**Sr. Maria Giovanna Titone**

*Italy*



The escalation of violence which occurred in Iran after the death of Mahsa Amini on September 16 prompted us, the International Commission for Peace, Justice and the Integrity of Creation to try to understand what is happening in the country.

The situation is very serious and worrisome and is worthy of our attention, our prayers and our support as consecrated women dedicated to building the reign of God.

Mahsa Amini was a young Kurdish woman. On September 13, 2022, she was arrested by the morality police because she had a bit of hair peeking out from her hijab, the headcovering that Muslim women wear which was imposed by law since 1981. Eyewitnesses said that the woman was beaten and hit her head, resulting in a cerebral hemorrhage that led to brain death. September 16 was the day she was declared dead.

Her death unleashed a torrent of protests, which swept through the world of schools and universities, with the younger generation, especially the women, challenging the law of the Iranian government. In spite of herself, 23 year old Hadith Najafi became a symbol of the protest when she was shot six times for having taken off her veil and gathered her hair in a chignon – a trivial

gesture for a western woman. Along with her, many other young people were killed, wounded and arrested for demanding that human rights be respected in Iran.

According to the Oslo-based non-governmental organization, Iran Human Rights (IHR), more than 304 protestors have died in Iran since the wave of protests erupted after the death of Mahsa Amini, including 41 under age 18



and 24 women. In addition, at least 14,170 persons, including 392 students, were arrested.

We believe that the response of the young people and the international organizations in face of all this has been half-hearted. We note, in fact, only one intervention on the part of the Council of the EU which has adopted a human rights sanctions regime in Iran, accusing 11 persons and 4 entities for their role in the death of Mahsa Amini and the violent response to the recent demonstrations in the country.

Non-governmental organization, on the other hand, 43 of them including Amnesty International, have tried to focus attention on the issue, requesting the Human Rights Council of the UN to act urgently in response to the

present crisis in Iran, holding a special session and asking for an independent investigation into the death of Mahsa Amini to ascertain responsibility.

Nonetheless, the facts remain: in Iran the people continue to demonstrate for freedom and the theocracy represses this with violence.

In the past few weeks we have proposed to all the provinces, regions and missions, eight questions that might help us to understand what is happening in Iran. We would like each one to feel involved in taking a stand to support the women of Iran today, but, in general, all the women whose freedom is denied. In fact, for while our situation may be different, none of us can say we are truly free until there is no woman whose human dignity is denied.

As JPIC we are asking ourselves how to build a network of contacts that can keep alive and give voice to the cause of Iranian women and men.

Is this not what the Gospel asks of us? To free the oppressed! To give voice to those whom the logic of the world wants to silence!

The memory of what happened in Syria and Afghanistan is too recent to not know that silence and indifference give a license for the destruction of the culture and the survival of a people.

Let us welcome in our prayer this new generation of Iranian women and not be afraid to be spokespersons for the desire of freedom. This will help us as religious, as well, to live the prophetic dimension of our call!

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## A THREAT TO SPREAD JPIC VALUES

**Sr. Arpita Varikkaplakel**

*Tanmaya - India*



In India, 26th November is celebrated as Constitution Day. The Indian Constitution gives every citizen the right to profess, practice and propagate one's faith. However, the missionary institutions and the church activities are apparently

falling prey to the undemocratic thoughts of the ruling party. Attacks on minority institutions, especially Catholic institutions, are increasing day by day in almost every state. The states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, where we have many

communities, are on the top of the list. The incidents which took place in Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh, on 3rd, 21st and 25th October 2022 are clear evidence.

On 3rd October, the Youth Convention for more than 500 students arranged at St. Pius



Diocesan School was stopped by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) – a wing of the ruling government. The well-planned group stopped the vehicle of the students travelling on the way and took the students and priests to the police station. They were released late at night. The basic needs of the students were denied. Most of the students were from far flung villages and were also tribals. The massive programme was cancelled and incurred great financial and material loss.

On 21st October, St. Joseph's Convent School, Khandwa, had a grand celebration of Diwali, the festival of lights and the most important festival of the Hindu community in India. This festival proclaims the triumph of light over darkness, truth over falsehood and good over evil. This was depicted in the form of dance drama and many other programmes like skits, speeches, songs, rooted in JPIC. It was highly appreciated by many, and in particular by the chief guest who belongs to the ruling party. The same



**Hindu Fanatics stopping the programme**

students performed a street play in front of the Municipal Corporation to give awareness on pollution, the harmful side of using many fireworks during festivals, the urgent need to protect the environment. They also highlighted the exploitation of the weaker members of society and how the children could convince their parents to stop such exploitation. A group of Hindu fanatics arrived and demanded that the street play stop.

On 25th October, the same group came in front of the school at night and set off firecrackers in large quantities and threatened

the institution. They also warned all the Catholic Institutions to stop such activities or else be ready to face the consequences. Still we are moving forward courageously with our daily activities as planned, spreading the message of justice, peace and protection of creation. We have experienced the power of God in the past decade and believe that the tough times never last. We treasure, live and work under the umbrella of our chapter theme "Immersed in the spirit, connected with the world, witnessing love." Let our nation, India, be filled with the spirit of God, not with the spirit of fanaticism.

## NEW SAINTS

Sr. Catherine Flynn	93	USA	15.11.2022
Sr. Maria de Lurdes	73	Brazil	23.11.2022
Sr. Elvira Panarelli	94	Italy	04.12.2022

## ST. JOSEPH FAMILY OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REFLECTS ON SYNODALITY

**Sr. Valesca Mesquita Orzi**

*Brazil*



On November 6, 2022, we of the St. Joseph family met on the Zoom platform to reflect on Synodality. We started by sharing about what is happening in the Synodal journey in different countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Uruguay. There are many different activities taking place according to each context. Some groups have their roots in the diocese and include parish and pastoral groups; others develop their projects in schools or activity centers which include young people and children. There is much richness and life. After sharing, we were challenged and enriched by Sr. Daniela Cannavina, from the Capuchin Congregation of Mother Rubatto, ICMR, Secretary General

of the Latin American Conference of Religious.

Sr. Daniela said that any action that encourages and builds a collaborative Church requires that people change their mindset, their relationships, and their ways of acting which opens up spaces for true inclusive participation,

making the axiom of the Church of the first millennium a reality: "What affects all must be dealt with by all." We are invited to infuse life, in all its aspects and dimensions, with synodality. That is, with how we proceed, live and act, regarding everything we do and why we do it. It is



*Dejarnos  
afectar  
sinodalmente*

*Let us be affected by synodality*

not a veneer to soothe consciences; it does not imply renewing but creating something new.

It is generative listening... an interpersonal connection in a climate of equality and mutual respect, giving rise to the understanding that we are ONE as a body, therefore, co-creators of the present and future reality with each one living in community.

It is necessary to allow ourselves to be affected by the synod to learn to listen as Church, as community, and as a charismatic family in the diversity of ministries and charisms. We need to seek together the will of God by listening to the invitations of the Spirit to us and create spaces, wherever we are in the service of people inspired by Divine Ruah, from the depths of our being. This will make it possible to recreate the centrality of our following of Jesus Christ and renew our mystical-prophetic-communal commitment with the neediest and excluded.



*Sr. Daniela Cannavina - CLAR*

Discernment is essential to accept the new proposal of life that God is making to us personally and as a community, with the urgency of unlearning the former evangelical ways of being Church and religious life and intuiting the signs of God's living presence in the dawn of each new day of this historic hour. It requires existential and geographic itinerancy to launch ourselves into the path of the storm and and be ready to

embrace the mystery of life on the shores of a new continent. To mobilize ourselves on the frontiers where the fruitful commitment of our consecrated life is urgent, one of the ways can be inter-congregational and intercultural missionary activity. To weave new networks with the threads of communion and diversity is to allow oneself to navigate the night and undertake with others the path to the full light of day – our original Galilee.

To make decisions we need to listen, pray, dialogue, analyze and take advice. This means relearning to walk together. Pope Francis tells us that walking together is a path that builds the Church; it allows us to interpret reality with the eyes and heart of God. It is the condition for following the Lord Jesus Christ and being servants of life today. Breath and synodal steps reveal what we are and the dynamism of communion that animates our decisions.

# NEW SAINTS

Sr. Anna Gabriella Chiavaroli	98	Italy	04.12.2022
Sr. Helen Dowd	94	USA	04.12.2022
Sr. Lucia Catarina	88	Brazil	11.12.2022



# LEADERS AS LEAVEN - INDIA

**Sr. Maria Vaz**

*Province of Nirmala - India*

***“The Leaven  
of true leadership  
cannot lift others unless  
we are with and serve  
those to be  
led.”***



The Leaders as Leaven – India workshop was held in Pune, November 9-12, 2022. Sisters came to Pune, a city not far from Mumbai, India, arriving from the east, west, north and south as well as from Italy to join the participants and mentors for a common purpose. Sisters from three LAC congregations (Lyon, Annecy, Chambéry) travelled to JD (Jnana Deepa - Pontifical Athenaeum) with zeal and passion for the society and the motive to be Leaders as Leaven in India.

The session commenced with a heart-touching opening ceremony invoking the blessings of God followed by a vibrant and motivational introduction of participants and mentors as well as marvelous interactive sessions between participants and mentors for a brief and effective mutual

enrichment.

The initiative to organise the workshop on leadership was taken by Sr. Barbara Bozak, who herself is a great leader and has a special passion as well as love for the Indian mission. It was a proud moment for all gathered members to interact

session was presented by Sr. Patrica Santos who elucidated the difference between leadership and management, quoting P.T. Joseph who said : “Management provides order to the day-to-day running of organizations whereas leadership constantly tries to find new directions for progress.” A



***Katia explaining the Leadership Circle Profile - 360°***

and share positive vibrations in the groups as well as individually. All had a magnificent experience of learning and sharing ideas, thoughts and experiences.

A thought-provoking

good leader should possess the traits and behaviors that lead to discovering within oneself the positive power and authority for building human character which would inspire others.



Ms. Kathia Laszlo travelled all the way from California to give essential input to this LAC group. Her session on the 360° Leadership Circle profile enabled the participants to discover themselves from within. Though discovering the inner potential is not easy, Kathia helped the participants, in an experiential way, to take the inward journey from reactive to creative tendencies and expand their personality, as the 360 profile is a map for inner growth towards leadership.

Group discussions enabled the participants to journey through sharing and exchanging



views as well as understanding situations. Those present had a pleasant experience of listening and sharing openly.

Sr. Barbara and Kathia left no stone unturned to keep the momentum going to guide and lead the group to the fullest. The

journey towards inner growth to be 'Leaders as Leaven' is the pathway. Every member who gathered in JD made the most of what was offered by attending the sessions whole heartedly, committed to follow the plan of the year with determination.

## MUSINGS FROM THE IRISH REGION

**Sr. Celine Duffy**

*Ireland*

**W**hile reflecting On the European/USA Network and the many aspects of transition within our Mission/Region in Wales and Ireland. Here are some compelling

facts which draw us closely together.

The Mission in Wales was 'born' as a result of World War II, 1939- 1945. Two Irish sisters from Kamptee, India, Sisters

Stanislaus and Bridget came to Ireland in search of vocations for the mission in India. The outbreak of the war prevented them from returning.

They consulted with the





Apostolic Nuncio and were given permission to open a small house in Crickhowell, South Wales hence the beginning of the Welsh Mission. It was here that the first postulant was received.

At a Congress in Dublin, Ireland, due to a chance meeting with a sister of St. Joseph of Chambéry the process of uniting with Chambéry was begun, both for Wales and Saugor, India. This process was completed in 1947 by the American General Councillor, Mother Herman Joseph Vanasse. The sisters returned to Saugor with six novices.

The novitiate in South Wales was named St. Michael's. It was a large house enclosed on secluded grounds and was to become the cradle of the Region for many years.

The development of

the novitiate was mainly dependent on vocations from Ireland. Vocations did increase over many years including one from the Danish Province.

The facilities for further education and development were utilised in many areas, academically and spiritually.

The desire to open a community in Ireland became apparent and Mother De Pazzi, an American General Councillor, approached the Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid, who proposed a property for a hospital in Raheny, Edenmore House. This became St. Joseph's Hospital which was opened in 1956.

The Welsh Mission thrived for many years both in Wrexham and in Caernarfon. The missionary spirit of the sisters was enhanced by sisters from India, two of

whom are now in the Irish Region.

It is very interesting to note that there is a link between the origins of the Irish region and the US, now seen in the European/USA Network.

Our foundation began with two Sisters from Saugor, India. Then came Sisters from the USA to Wales and Ireland. To open St. Joseph's Hospital in Dublin Irish Sisters were asked to return from India, France and Norway to work there. In later years Sisters from Ireland went on mission to India, Sweden, Pakistan, Liberia, Belgium, USA, France and Tanzania.

'Though we live in a world that dreams of ending, that always seems about to give in, something that will not acknowledge conclusion insists the we forever begin'. Begin. (Brendan Kennelly)

# ASSOCIATES OF BRAZIL PARTICIPATED IN THE LE PUY FORMATION PROGRAM IN FRANCE

**Sr. Adelide Canci**

*Brazil*



A group of seven collaborators, who work in three institutions of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry in Rio Grande do Sul (RS), participated in the Program 'Mission Effectiveness': The Living Charism in the Ministries of the Sisters of St. Joseph, from September 24th to 1st October 2022 in Le Puy-en-Velay in France.

This program aims to offer a pilgrimage to collaborators of institutions of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The program provides an experience of immersion in the original spirit and global dimension of the Congregation's charism and spiritual tradition. It allows one to delve deeply through lectures, prayers, sharing of experiences, and visits to historic places in Le Puy and Lyon.

These collaborators are offered an opportunity to experience God in the land of the Congregation's origins along with other colleagues from various places in the world where

the Sisters of St. Joseph are in mission.

The meeting was facilitated by Srs. Dolores Clerico, from Philadelphia (USA), and Phyllis DiFuccia, from NW Pennsylvania (USA).

Sharing of the valuable

experience of participants:

Mirela Rissardi Marcon and Andrea Carnino were from our Hospital Nossa Senhora da Oliveira – Vacaria/RS. They said: "At this meeting, we had the opportunity to share experiences and work with people from



*Employees in the kitchen in Puy*



different countries: Denmark, Canada, USA, Wales, France, Norway, and Italy. It was a week in which we were able to meet and interact with people who are also involved in the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Living and sharing experiences with other lay people energized us and gave us the strength to continue the work with commitment and dedication. We realize that our collaboration is a small but important part of the entire Project of the Sisters. Those were amazing days! To know the origins and work of the sisters as well as the difficulties they faced gives us the courage to continue with the mission and do our work better”.

Eliz Regina Perotoni de Oliveira, Lorita Menegon de

Souza, and Marcos Agnolin are from St. Joseph School, Caxias do Sul/RS. They said: “Being in Le Puy was literally an immersion in the history of the CSJ, but not only that. It offered us an opportunity to understand, in the broadest and deepest sense, the saying ‘May they all be one’. We felt close to people so different from us, from distant places and speaking different languages. We felt close to the first Sisters of St. Joseph. We experienced the unity and effectiveness of the mission. Now, our greatest desire is to be able to share with our families, colleagues, and students, a little of the experience we lived in Le Puy. We are eternally grateful for the opportunity.”

Sabrina Rodrigues Ribeiro and Thais Pereira Silveira are from St. Joseph School, Pelotas/RS. They said “It was an excellent opportunity to embrace the past and drink from the source where the Little Design was sown and which produced much fruit worldwide. It was a time to deepen our history and weave a journey of faith, guided by the light of the spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Through this experience, we were challenged to become aware of God who is close to us, who invites us to enter into the circle of life where, in diversity, we create communion by bringing together diverse groups and languages, to share the same dream ‘that all may be one.’”

## A JOURNEY BACK TO THE ROOTS



**Susanne Malchau Dietz** (Left)  
*Archivist, Nurse Historian, PhD*

&

**Anette Jensen** (Right)  
*Secretary, Historian, PhD*



### Denmark

**W**hen we sit in the office in Copenhagen and solve tasks for the sisters, we know that the Chambéry branch is widespread in the world. We know that new Provinces and Regions have been created and abolished over time. But it feels like we only

know the tip of the iceberg. We experienced this clearly when we attended a course at the Centre International St. Joseph in Le Puy-En-Velay entitled: “Mission Effectiveness: The Charism Alive in CSSJ Ministries” from September 24 to October 1, 2022.

Just outside the Centre’s door, the first Sisters began their ministry in 1650. We walked the same streets and entered the same houses. It was a highlight when we stood in the sisters’ first kitchen. In front of the fireplace, we stood in our sneakers, iPhone in hand, trying to figure out how

it all started. Standing on the same floor the first Sisters had stood on, we felt and experienced the long history, deep roots and strong traces of the Sisters of Saint Joseph.

A few days later, we followed in Mother St. John Fontbonne's footsteps as we travelled to Lyon. There, we visited the Origin and Evolution Centre, which shows how she ensured the spread of sisters throughout the world after the French Revolution. We saw her bed and other personal belongings. We went on to Notre Dame Cathedral, where Mother St. John prayed for the sisters she had sent to the United States, and finally we visited her tomb.

During the course, we were well prepared for the historical excursions through intense teaching. Sister Dolores Clerico, SSJ (Philadelphia, USA) taught via Zoom and Sister Phyllis DiFuccia, SSJ (NW Pennsylvania, USA) was present in Le Puy. The two were a good example of working together as they focused on history, charism and on our role as lay people.

The participants were from different branches of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, with the branch we came from of no importance. There were participants from Brazil, USA, Canada, Wales, France and then Denmark. Our connections with the sisters spanned administrative staff, school teachers, principals, nurses, historians and associates. All nationalities made a brief presentation on the current situation of the sisters in their country and their history there. The group was also ecumenical.

From the beginning we felt that the group had a special



*Visiting the Sisters of Saint Joseph first kitchen was to everyone a very memorable experience. We all had heard so much about this for the tradition sacred place and now we were standing at the same floor where the sisters began their mission in the 17th Century.  
(Photo Susanne Malchau DietFoto 4026)*

curiosity, love and warmth. We believe that we were all influenced by the charism of the sisters beforehand, and that was what brought us together and created unity.

We learned that the Sisters of Saint Joseph were founded as a loose organization whose members consisted of widows, unmarried women and also men who lived according to Fr. Médaille's Maxims. They had not necessarily taken vows. It was something many of us could identify with. It was rewarding that we met other lay people, talked to each other and experienced the places together. And we reflected together and separately on the importance of charism in our work and personal lives.

The course allowed us to experience a larger part of the iceberg of which we knew only the tip, and it has deepened our connection with the Sisters of Saint

Joseph. We have established a network among lay people and in doing so have learned that we are part of the leaven that shares the same charism regardless of which branch we are attached to.



*In Mother Fontbonne's reconstructed private room we found the iconic drawing of courageous Sisters of Saint Joseph sentenced to be guillotined during the French revolution. They opposed the rule that Religious should give oath to the Constitution.  
(Origin and Evolution Centre in Lyon)  
(Photo Susanne Malchau Dietz)*



# A LEAP INTO MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

**Sr. Prasanna Kachappilly**

*Province of Pachmarhi - India*



**A**mala Institute, Jehangirabad, Bhopal was the attraction from 22nd to 25th October 2022 as eight selected sisters of the province of Pachmarhi, India, participated in a media training programme. The number was limited to eight since individual training was given using computers from the institute. Knowing well the importance of media and communication, Sr. Maurice George, Provincial Superior, and Sr. Navya Neelamvilail, the Co-ordinator of the Communication Commission, organised this intensive training program for the sisters in charge of communication from various regions of the province.

Sr. Navya began the first session on mobile photography showing the different techniques of capturing photos to make them more effective, meaningful and attractive. The participants were given time to

practice what they had learned as well.

Sr. Maurice took the sessions on media education, covering media awareness, types of media, aims of mass media, newspaper analysis, journalism, and editing. Each topic was explained well followed by the exercises.

Sr. Maurice was keen that the participants pick up the right way to articulate information while writing. She began the journalism class in a dramatic form to give the matter for reporting. The participants were asked to write and rewrite in order that it make sense and was to the point. We learned that mental imagery adds

new evidence and provides new insights. A picture was used to teach the group photo language and to create a story out of it, aware that the meaning of the picture is in the mind of the viewer.

Humans are visual creatures and the present generation is all for media and technology. Sr. Navya's practical lessons on Canva (a computer program for publishing) enabled the participants to design patterns for newsletters and page layout for various occasions. The group was also creatively engaged in photography and videography and edited these projects in Canva.





Each one came out with a media project. The basics of InDesign were well explained for page layout of official documents. A glimpse of Photoshop was given for editing photos. Live streaming using a cell phone was also explained, with the reminder that first one needs to be good at videography. These sessions were very interesting and useful for our day-to-day functioning. Navya took keen interest and made every effort to make the group understand correctly; she was ever willing to repeat till they were sure of it.

Media events aren't just one-off opportunities. They're a chance to make a real connection with another in various ways. Sr. Maurice shared with us how the media



gave a golden opportunity for evangelization during the Covid-19 lockdown. We were given an opportunity to improve our communication skills through various communication tools. Hats off to Sisters Maurice and

Navya for giving us this great opportunity to learn these media skills which included: Canva, Photography, Videography, Live Streaming, Page Layout, Photoshop, Journalism and Writing skills.

## “A CRY FOR LIFE” NETWORK

**Sr. Vilma de Oliveira**

*Brazil*

“A Cry for Life” Network works to prevent human trafficking, especially trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, in partnership with non-governmental and governmental organizations, social movements, and other segments of civil society. It is a project of the Conference of Religious of Brazil with Action

Centers throughout the country.

The 6th National Electoral Assembly of “A Cry for Life” Network took place from the 7th to the 9th of October 2022 and also celebrated 15 years of existence. The meeting was held in Brasilia at the network’s headquarters. The participants were those in charge of the nuclei and the regional leaders in Brazil.

The theme of the assembly was: “In the cry of life, hope is born”. In fact, this theme emerged from the simple current reality of Brazil and the world.

I participated in this assembly as representative of the Region of Curitiba/Paraná. It was a time of great enlightenment and hope. A joint sharing of concerns and actions in the fight



to defend trafficked persons. “Human trafficking trades the victim as a commodity that can be sold, exchanged, transported and exploited”. We cannot keep silent or continue ignoring this reality in our midst. It is necessary to choose life and defend it, from this market of death that subtly surrounds us, taking away life, destroying families, and killing people, just to satisfy personal, individualistic, and financial interests. It is sad and heartbreaking to know that there are people and families who live in luxury and wealth at the risk of others losing their life. Let us remember that human trafficking has different forms and clients to be satisfied: deprivation of liberty, slavery, labor, removal of organs, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, and begging. A cruel reality in our eyes, human trafficking is a serious violation of human rights.

We need to always be ready to welcome, cherish and care for the children of God who are in danger, that is, the “sheep” of the Great Shepherd Jesus, who are



**Sr. Vilma (fifth from left to right in the last row) with the participants of the Assembly**

victims of all kinds of exclusion and exploitation.

Human trafficking is very present in our midst, yet “the harvest is great, but the laborers are few”. The cry for life, the appeals are at our door. What shall we do? “Blessed are the peacemakers, blessed are those persecuted for justice’ sake...” It is necessary to continue to implore God to awaken more people to collaborate in this mission. It is necessary to publicize, raise awareness and inform people and families about this violent market

that destroys lives.

We know that this work is difficult; not everyone understands or wants to get involved, and much of society prefers to act with indifference or ignore the situation. We implore St. Josefina Bakhita, patroness of victims of human trafficking, to intercede for all who embrace this cause, giving them strength and perseverance: “I am poor, but I am worthy, I seek a better world, without slaves and masters. Now it’s time to go out into the world and shout...”

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