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GENERAL COUNCIL

SUMMARY

NEW GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE AND ETHICAL INVESTMENTS IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Sr. Maria Cristina Gavazzi CSJ

General Council



On November 25, 2022, the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences published a document entitled *Mensuram Bonam* (Good Measure), which contains some “Faith-Based Measures for Catholic Investors.” It is a set of principles and criteria, as well as practical and methodological guidelines for those who work in the world of finance, both as institutions and as individuals,

and who strive to live their faith consistently, contributing to the promotion of an inclusive and integral development of people.

It is a “starting point” – as stated on the cover – about sustainable and responsible investments, to be taken as a point of reference for investors. The result of several years of work involving various experts from the world of science and

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New Guidelines for sustainable and ethical investments in the Catholic Church

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Paul Schott Stevens, trustee of Catholic Investment Services, moderator



Jean-Baptiste de Franssu, President of the Board of the Vatican Bank

finance, the document draws on the main experiences already achieved in various episcopal conferences (Europe and the US) or inspired by other religious denominations. It is clearly in line with the entire tradition of Catholic Social Teaching, with specific attention to the world of finance.

During the presentation of *Mensuram Bonam* organized last January 25th, 2023 by the German Catholic bank Pax-Bank and attended by Sr Maria Cristina Gavazzi, Cardinal Turkson (Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy) affirmed that “the document could not reach a better time, after the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic which has brought to light other pandemics due to dysfunctional social systems, such as job insecurity, poor access to health care, food insecurity and corruption.” Therefore, the opportunity to “look to a future that we can

dream together and discover values and priorities in teaching our faith and its wisdom to build that future and let criteria also with faith inspire our investments.”

The text intends to be an opportunity for discernment, to encourage companies to pursue investment policies in line with Catholic Social Teaching and to be a stimulus for investment processes where they have not yet been conceived and implemented. A compass, therefore, not only for believers, but also for those who do not explicitly profess any religion.

The document is divided into two parts. The first contains the pillars of faith and of Catholic Social Teaching, starting from which the various investment activities are oriented with vision and responsibility towards integral human development. The second part contains operational answers,

presenting a method for faith-based investments, with indications on how to apply it: steps to follow, tools to use, etc.

As a congregation we are encouraged to read *Mensuram Bonam* (available online) and constantly review the criteria of our investments at the General level and at the level of Provinces, Regions and Missions, highlighting some exclusion criteria on sensitive topics that require a careful discernment of faith; for example, the fields of armaments, pornography, fossil fuels, human rights violations, governmental corruption.

These are ‘good measures,’ therefore, which will undoubtedly require further reflection and insight, but which represent a first step in overcoming societal tensions and improving our global community, starting with individual believers.

SEPARATING CONTAINERS AND PAPER

Sr. Sujatha Palepu CSJ

France/Belgium



In the French province we encourage one other to carry out the invitations of the General Chapter: “Living the calls of ‘Laudato Si’ through integral ecology, caring for life in all its dimensions”. On Tuesday night, February 16, 2023, seventeen sisters from the province participated in a program to learn how to better separate containers and waste. A young professional who lives in Bois Joli, where we have a community, was our invited teacher that evening. He explained very well the different levels of waste management using documents projected on the big screen. He taught us the types of waste: namely paper, cardboard, plastic, metal, glass, non-recyclables, etc., as well as the volume and dangers of waste, reuse, recycling, treatment and storage.

On average, in France, we produce 568 kilos of waste per person, per year. This is why

we would like to learn how to protect our environment and care for nature which is our common home.

As of January 1, 2023, new sorting instructions have arrived in the whole of France. In Savoy, the Chambéry sorting centre had to adapt to this new programme.

In Bellecombette, we have a spot where the traditional containers (yellow, brown and grey) are placed along with other containers for glass,

green waste, corks, stale bread, fruit and vegetable peels. At this spot we have a place to dump bulky items which will be regularly transported to the dump or recycling centre. There are so many kinds of waste in our trash baskets sometimes we don't know which bin to use for the waste.

After an hour and a half of oral training, the technician invited us, one by one, to pick up one or two waste items and put them in the right bin.



The sisters who participated in the session on recycling



S. Annemarie puts into practice what she has learned

We are called to be “Ambassadors of Sorting” in order to respect nature and safeguard it for the next generation. It was a very rich community experience. Thus to avoid the possibility that the burden on the environment does not increase to 590 kg per person per year, let us try to be more disciplined in our personal life, beginning right now! This is easier said than done, of course! However, we can develop and integrate these simple new habits in our daily lives.

WORKING FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE IN HARTFORD

Sr. Elaine Betoncourt CSJ

USA



In 2019, 35 diverse faith communities launched the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA) to bring about greater justice for the marginalized people in the city by working for systemic change in Connecticut laws. From 2019 to 2021 GHIAA helped to enact a law that allows persons who have been incarcerated to have a

felony charge erased from their record after a period of no further arrests, something that previously had not been possible, thus paving the way to better integration into the community. GHIAA efforts also helped to remove a law that required people who had received state assistance to pay back that money should they receive an inheritance or

substantial funds from another source. This law, which was abolished, effectively prevented persons who were poor from ever getting a better standard of living.

In December of 2022, GHIAA launched a second series of initiatives. One initiative is to provide better mental health care for everyone, including

immigrants, who are often excluded from such services. They also sought more government funding to increase violence prevention efforts in urban areas which is badly needed. Another important area of concern is the funding gap for schools since schools in more affluent communities are well-funded while those in minority neighborhoods lack essential resources. An issue in the Hartford area and one in most cities is the lack of affordable housing. GHIAA is engaged in advocacy to increase affordable housing and to establish a rent cap of a 3% annual increase to curb predatory rent hikes, all too common in low income areas. Yet another area of advocacy is working for environmental justice. In our Hartford capitol region, both the waste removal land fill and trash to energy plant which service many municipalities, are in areas populated by people earning low incomes. Consequently they suffer the results of air, land and water pollution, causing a preponderance of health problems for these residents.

Through the Collaborative Center for Justice which was founded in 1999 and is supported by six religious congregations, including the Sisters of St Joseph of Chambéry, we participate with GHIAA to effect systemic changes in our home state of Connecticut. This is one way we are responding to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.



A woman from GHIAA addressing Connecticut lawmakers



A group preparing to engage residents in advocating for decent housing

SIGNS OF LIFE AFTER COVID-19

Sr. Christopher Whealen CSJ

Province of Pachmarhi



Sister Christopher Whelan arrived in Sagar, India in 1952 as a postulant from Ireland. In 1969 at the request of the provincial she came to Bhopal to care for the mentally challenged children. She committed her life to the education and development of those children at Miriam School for the Mentally Challenged and continues to work with great enthusiasm and vision. Till 2013 she worked full time in the school and hostel and now, aged 90, she continues to be interested in this mission.

Early in the year 2021 we were quite suddenly ordered by the Government to close all schools and residential hostels because quite a few citizens had Covid 19. It had to be done as quickly as possible!

We immediately contacted all of the parents of our resident students here at the Miriam School in Bhopal, some of whom had to make a 24-hour journey to get here. It took about three days to clear the hostel. We have fourteen classrooms



S. Christopher with a group of the children in Miriam School

with twelve students in each, consisting of Day pupils and Residential students! We

had 87 boys and 39 girls in residence. The school and hostel is for the mentally

challenged children.

We had no idea how long the closure would be! We thanked God that the Government was paying the salaries of our teachers!

The closure lasted slightly longer than two years. Our building is quite extensive and the voices of children laughing, singing, calling out to each other had always been constant! And now only silence! Silence! SILENCE!!! It was quite a depressing two years. Parents were constantly phoning us to know if we had any update on reopening.

Then early in 2022 we received the joyous news that schools and hostels could reopen! We immediately got to uncovering everything in the classrooms, the bedrooms, the dining room, and the play areas!!! It was truly uplifting to see the building come back to life.

As the children came back it was delightful to see their joy at being able to walk all around our school and hostel. They had been confined in their homes for two years and the majority of them come from quite small homes! The whole atmosphere could only be compared to coming back

to life after dying.... truly!

It was most comforting to note that our students had not forgotten the many correct ways of living and behaving. Some small examples would illustrate that. The bell rings for various activities and without having to be told the

do not have such facilities in their one room home but he had not forgotten what is expected of our students in Miriam School for the Mentally Challenged.

In April 2022 we had another order from the government to close all hostels and schools since the



S. Christopher with a group of the children in Miriam School

children knew where they had to go and formed lines.

One particular incident really amazed me. I was showing the boys' hostel to some parents and as we came to the boys' toilets one little fellow said he needed to use the toilet so we waited for the minute it took and when he had buttoned up his pants, he walked across the room instead of coming to us. His mummy said, "Come here" and he told her, "I have to wash my hands!" She was quite amazed and explained they

number of Covid patients was rapidly increasing. Since we were keeping ourselves alert of the situation, we understood the Government was judiciously keeping all citizens safe!

Then on 1st July 2022 we opened our doors again. Many students did not return for various reasons, most prominently for financial problems.

We praise and thank God that we are still going and many mentally challenged children continue to join us as new pupils.

YOUNG PEOPLE RESEARCHING THE HISTORY OF THE SISTERS OF SAINT JOSEPH

Sr. Gisela Heitz CSJ

Denmark



Noah Carlsen, a 17 year old high school student from a small town in Southern Jutland, saw the historical drama “The Bombardment” a couple of years ago. This film, produced by Ole Bornedal (Denmark 2021), is about the worst tragedy in the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Denmark: the bombing of the French School (Jeanne d’Arc School) in March 1945, where 86 children and 18 adults lost their lives, including 10 Sisters of St. Joseph. The school buildings were completely destroyed. As Noah watched the film, he realized that these were children of his age, in his own country, who lost their lives. They were innocent victims. He did not see meaning in this tragedy and the question “Why?” kept hammering in his head. He was deeply moved by the fate that befell so many more than 70 years ago.

Then it happened that

Noah had to write a sample exam paper to be presented to his whole class. The topic was optional. For Noah, it was clear what he wanted to investigate and research: it was the disaster at the end of World War II that he had seen in the

movie, what had happened to the school of the Sisters of St. Joseph. He was determined to help tell the story, to bring it to life so that it would not be forgotten. Noah writes in his essay: The children and nuns who survived were just told to



Noah at the monument which depicts S. Edith and two children from the school

forget about it. They didn't talk about it or get the treatment they needed, because they said that "children forget" but you don't just forget something like that. In fact, some of the survivors who are alive today have only been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder 60 years later and have received treatment. Some of the parents who lost their children committed suicide or drank themselves to death because they were so traumatized by the loss of their child. Many of the children did not know which of their classmates were alive until years later because the accident had to be hushed up.

Noah talked to his parents, teachers and friends who supported him in this project. He traveled to Copenhagen (a 7-hour journey

from his hometown!) to see the site. He contacted survivors and relatives (descendants) of the victims. He also interviewed journalists who had dealt with the case. He visited many cemeteries where the victims are buried. Noah writes about his experiences in the cemeteries: I went to Copenhagen to see if I could find some gravestones of the children and adults who died in the accident and we found quite a few. Noah found a gravestone with the name Gerda Moltzen and he investigated her fate: Gerda was a teacher at the school where she herself had been a student. During the tragic bombing on March 21, 1945, Gerda Moltzen fearlessly tried to save as many children as possible from the burning

buildings. She succeeded, but she herself perished when the walls collapsed.

In his research, Noah points out that sister Edith also saved 23 children from death, but unlike Gerda, Sr. Edith survived the accident.

Noah was hooked on his task and in September 2022 traveled to England to see the last of the Royal Air Force planes that came from England with their bomb load that should have destroyed the Nazi German headquarters, but by unfortunate circumstances hit the school instead.

Every year on March 21, a memorial service is held at the monument that was erected where the school had once been located. Naturally, Noah is present at this event, and it was here that we, the Sisters of St. Joseph, got to know him.

NEW SAINTS

S. Elisabeth Stenzel	92	Denmark	23.02.2023
S. Rosa Guedes	105	Brazil	04.03.2023
S. Franziska Wolken	98	Norway	08.03.2023
S. Edith Berton	93	Brazil	11.03.2023
S. Luiza Maria	97	Brazil	13.03.2023
S. Maria Mathias	86	Brazil	18.03.2023
S. Helide Joanna Lazzari	84	Brazil	08.04.2023
S. Beatriz Maria Rossi	85	Brazil	12.04.2023

200 YEARS IN SAINT JEAN DE MAURIENNE

Sr. Jona Chinnappan CSJ

France/Belgium



In 1822, the new Savoyard Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, led by Mother Saint John Marcoux, came to Saint Jean de Maurienne and grew and became the Sisters of Saint Jean de Maurienne. Much happened at the beginning of this congregation.

Three sisters from Chambéry arrived in St. Jean in 1822 to take care of the

poorhouse, which was totally dilapidated and repulsively dirty. Without further ado, repressing their gagging, they immediately began scrubbing the floors covered by a thick layer of filth. This is how the administrators who had come to greet them found them. “What?” they said, “Already at work! What do you think of our hospital?” “It’s a cesspool”

replied Mother St. John Marcoux who accompanied the Sisters. She had to fight and threaten to withdraw the sisters if the administrators did not make the necessary improvements. They found the needed money and very quickly the hospital changed for the better. (It was only in 1999 that the Sisters of Saint Joseph left the hospital of St Jean



The big convent of the sisters in Saint Jean de Maurienne

de Maurienne.) Three years later, in 1825, in a room in the cloister, the Sisters opened the first free school for the girls of the working class, who soon numbered more than a hundred. There then began a chorus of complaints from the women of the bourgeoisie who also sought sisters for the education of their daughters. The Sisters of St. Joseph founded about twenty of the first community schools for girls in Maurienne. Beginning in 1885, secularization laws forced the Sisters to close a large number of community schools. The Sisters kept some private schools and nursery schools. All of these establishments are now closed or entrusted to lay people.

The Province decided to celebrate this important year in a very special way. Last year, the Sisters from India had planned to come to France on pilgrimage to see the birthplace of the Sisters of Maurienne since more than 70 Sisters from Maurienne had gone to India to establish religious communities there. But the pandemic did not allow this project to be carried out. So we are celebrating the Bicentennial Jubilee this year. We still have the presence of 3 sisters in Maurienne in the town of la Chambre. It is important to give thanks to God for the many gifts we have received. Perhaps an occasion like the Bicentennial Jubilee is the right time for all of us to take a step back,



Drawing of Sr. Bénédicte de Vaublanc

and to examine honestly and humbly the paths we have taken. It is thanks to the French Sisters that the tree has become stronger in India and elsewhere.

If God permits this wonderful event to take place, we will celebrate with a Mass of thanksgiving in the church of Biollay on Sunday, May 21, 2023 at 10:00 am. We will also celebrate the jubilees of our Sisters of 80 years, 65 years, 60 years and 25 years of religious life and two centenarians: Srs. Germaine-Marie Oster and Marie-Madeleine Lagarde. What better way to celebrate the Bicentennial Jubilee than to thank God and our Sisters who marked an important phase of the history our Congregation!

At the invitation of the province, symbolically, the Provincial Council of Tanmaya

responded favourably by sending a group of 5 Sisters, who are celebrating their 25 years of religious life. They will share with us this exceptional moment of gratitude for all that the French Sisters had sown in India to develop the provinces. Likewise, they will discover the treasures of our Congregation's patrimony through the pilgrimage in the footsteps of St. Ignatius. The Province of France/Belgium is very grateful to the Congregation for all the support it gives to keep the flame alive in this cradle.

It is our great joy to celebrate this event in the parish community with lay people, friends and collaborators of the Province. The Eucharistic celebration will be presided over by Fr. Michel Euler, our diocesan administrator, as we are waiting for a bishop in our diocese.

COMMUNICATING RELIGIOUS LIFE

Sr. Navya Neelamvilail CSJ

ICC



On January 24th the International Union of Superiors General in Rome offered a webinar which included the launch of the materials and agenda for International Meeting for Communication in Religious Life, to be held online November 27th to November 30th, 2023.

The program, “Communicating Religious Life”, has as its vision: We communicate the heart of Female Religious Life. More than 700 participants followed the online Launch, including five ICC members: Navya, Eliana, Laveena, Ericka and Sumaira.

In the words of Patrizia Morgante, UISG Communication Officer, this meeting is important because women religious need “more adequate professional training to meet the technological and communicative challenges of our complex and rapidly changing societies.”

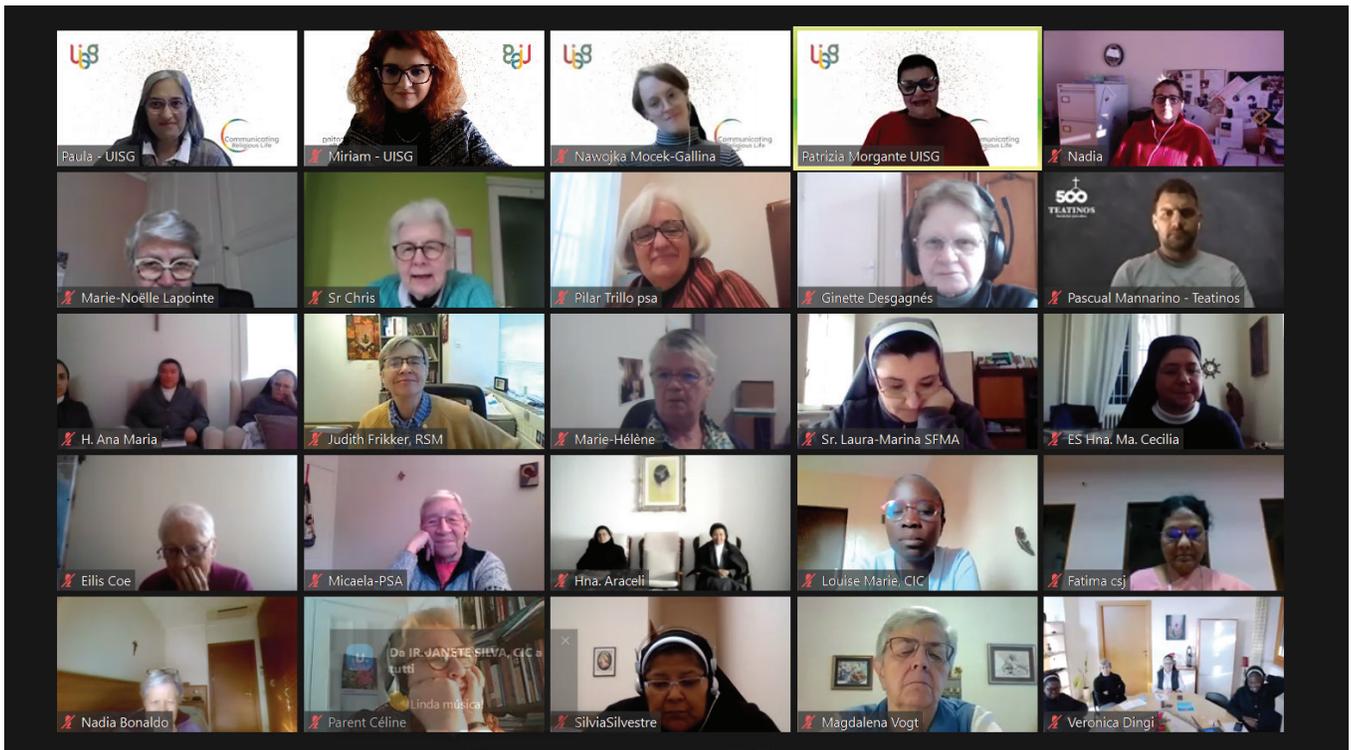
The goals of the November meetings include nurturing the culture of communication in the world’s congregations, strengthening networking and cooperation among communication experts in religious life and fostering communication skills, by means of formation programs.

The ICC members who followed the launch reflected on their experience and shared their insights.

“The Seminar on Communication is an opportunity to grow together as congregations through sharing experiences and nurturing a culture of communication, recognizing it as essential to the living out of our charisms, going beyond the actions and instrumentalities it offers us. Communication can help us give voice to our excluded brothers and sisters; it gives us the opportunity to



The team running the program



Sisters from different congregations attending the zoom session

communicate the beauty of consecrated life to the world. Through communication the voice of God is heard!"

- Sr. Eliana Aparecida dos Santos (Brazil)

“It was a first time I was part of the global body of women religious with an international identity. I was challenged by the facilitator concerning how to be present and bear witness to being truly human living in this digital world. It was emphasized that communication must be a common space to build mutual trust, openness as communal persons. In a world like this, media can help us to feel closer to one another, creating a sense of the unity of the human family which

can in turn inspire solidarity and serious efforts to ensure a more dignified life for all. Good communication helps us to grow closer, to know one another better and ultimately, and to grow in unity.”

- Sumaira CSJ, (Pakistan)

“Participating in the webinar to launch the course on Digital Evangelization, we were motivated to reflect on the importance of communicating the gospel through new technologies and know the techniques necessary to do it more effectively. Taking into account that technology advances rapidly, it is necessary to train ourselves to act within this area. We, the Sisters of St. Joseph

have a very rich charism to be communicated to the world.”

- Sr. Ericka Rodrigues CSJ (Bolivia)

“This session highlighted the importance of digital communication and its role for religious.. Communication within the congregation is not just a mission of the individual; there should be an efficient team to carry out this mission. Communication is the greatest gift ever received from God and as religious we have greater responsibility to be communicators of God’s love in this fragmented world. We belong to different cultures, traditions, customs, and there lies the beauty of communicating communion.”

- S. Laveena D’Souza (India)

LAUNDRIES FOR A LIFE WITH DIGNITY

Sr. Gabriela Cuéllar Durán CSJ



Bolivia

In Magdalena, Province of Iténez in the Department of Beni, Bolivia, since May the social project of building laundries for the low income women of the Pueblo Nuevo neighborhood, whose community is called Saint Joseph, has begun.

Twenty large families in this neighborhood have already benefited from this project which has been financed by the Global Mission Fund of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry. These laundries are small masonry and concrete structures, located in a small space on the property and are used to wash clothes. Ordinarily the family would use a plastic basin or a piece of wood on the patio or under a tree in very poor conditions. In the city of Beni and in other places in Bolivia there

is the occupation of laundress, women who dedicate themselves to washing clothes, sheets and various garments of other families who request this service.

The laundress is a woman whose occupation is to wash clothing, cited in the Bible in Mal 3:2, a task traditionally associated with the housewife, as an almost exclusively female

profession. Even if this has practically disappeared as an occupation in our society, it continues to play an important role for women in the third world and, in some developing countries, it is an occupation with hourly pay.

These small structures are used by the women to carry out their work, through which they earn money to support



their family. Therefore the project has come to cover the high demand for work that had gotten worse during Covid-19, which led to unemployment, hunger and fragile health.

With all this, the laundries are signs of hope which are expressed with spontaneous smiles and words of gratitude on the part of the families who have benefited and the women

who are able to get income for their own families.

The families and we also who carry out the project are infinitely grateful to the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry for sustaining the initiative to help the most disadvantaged of our society, in particular the women who are the most vulnerable and oppressed group. This project helps the women not only materially,

but it helps them feel appreciated and empowered to contribute both financially and emotionally in supporting their families. The commitment of the families in the neighborhood who have been part of this project is also visible: assuring that families have a decent space to wash their own clothing and are able to generate income, reducing their vulnerability.

RELIGIOUS LIFE IN A TECH-SAVVY WORLD

Sr. Nisha Karekkat CSJ

Province of Pachmarhi - India



Today we are living in a world of technology and communication. Everything that is happening is posted on social media. These changes and developments that are taking place in the modern society have tremendously affected religious life. Communication and media have almost become one of the basic needs of everyone.

Sr. Navya Neelamvilail, CSJ, coordinator of ICC, trained another group of sisters from

the province of Pachmarhi. At the request of the Provincial S. Maurice, 6 days of intense course was organized from 5-10 March 2023 in Pachmarhi on Videography and YouTube Livestreaming.

On the first day of the class basic skills for videography were explained to the group of eight sisters. The participants were asked to create a two-minute video story of 12 clips, 10 seconds each, using their cell phones.

Everyone came up with very interesting and creative video stories. The detail of each shot and story was discussed in the class. The next task was to create a continuous video story for 5 minutes. Every participant took keen interest in preparing the video in an attractive way. Each one's video was critiqued and suggestions were made for better shots.

We were also taught the basic rules of photography, editing in Canva and creating

YouTube thumbnails. During our course, we were fortunate to celebrate International Women's Day and the festival of Holi, with a video of the celebrations shot by the participants. It was then edited and uploaded to the Province's YouTube, with the participants learning how to edit and upload.

Live streaming was the another aspect of our course. All of us felt it a bit difficult in the beginning but once we got into the practice it was really amazing and we realized that it was worth learning. We got the opportunity to practice live steaming of the daily Eucharist but kept the visibility on 'unlisted', so it will not be seen by the public.

After learning the advantages of media we all



S. Navya giving instructions to the sisters on videography

felt that it is an excellent tool to proclaim the Word of God and to create an awareness of all that is taking place in the world around us.

The religious of India to some extent are neglecting the importance of media. Despite the large number of consecrated persons they have not succeeded in

making a large impact in the mainstream world. Media is a forbidden fruit in the formation of women religious even to this day! We all felt that it is high time that the church as a whole take up this responsibility seriously and make our Christian presence felt in the Indian society and the world at large.

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