

Danish

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GENERAL COUNCIL

SUMMARY

SOCIAL MEDIA AND CSJ CHARISM

Sr. Celine Kalathoor CSJ

General Council



Advancement in technology has made possible new forms of human interaction. In fact, the question no longer is whether to engage with the digital world, but how to do this. Some are born into this culture and are “digital

natives;” others gradually get accustomed to it as “digital immigrants.” In any case, our culture today is a digital culture.

At a time, when we are increasingly divided, when each person retreats into his/her own filtered bubble, social

GENERAL COUNCIL

Social Media and CSJ Charism

COVER

JPIC

Tanmaya: Justice-embedded education

3

PROVINCE/REGION/MISSION

Norway: Good-hearted and beautiful Marcia

5

Nirmala: Challenge of Interculturality

6

Bolivia: World Youth Day

8

USA: Bringing the charism to life

10

New Saints

11

Nagpur: Assuring the mission continues

12

Tanzania: My rich experiences in Italy

13

Tanmaya: Girl child: gift of God to humankind

15



and with our environment. These sacred encounters are spaces where each one feels comfortable and at peace with herself/himself and with the environment.

We are aware of the “hunger for unity” in today’s world where we find ourselves with the wounded, fragmented, polarized, and those in disharmony. As Sisters of St. Joseph “we live in community, as a leaven of unity in the world.”

media becomes a path leading some towards indifference, polarization and extremism. When individuals do not treat one another as human beings but as mere expressions of a certain point of view that they do not share, we witness another expression of the “throw-away culture” that breeds the “globalization” - and normalization - “of indifference.” Retreating into isolation focused on one’s own interests cannot be the way to restore hope. Rather, the only way forward is the

cultivation of a “culture of encounter,” which creates relationships and promotes friendship and peace among different peoples.

As stated in *Towards Full Presence* by Paolo Ruffini, social media is a space for connections and ultimately for relationships - with God, our neighbour and the environment. Our interaction with others and our environment ought to nourish our relationship with God, which must be visible in our relationship with others

(Final Document, p.3) “By accepting ourselves and others, we build our community life together each day. Through mutual forgiveness, trust, love and attention to each one we create the atmosphere of joy, simplicity, and sincere love that Father Médaille asked of the first sisters.” (Constitution, p.4) Through the responsible and creative use of social media, we are invited today to build and to “live among ourselves and in our neighbour’s service relationships of simplicity and sincere love.” (Constitution, p.3)

JUSTICE-EMBEDDED EDUCATION

Sr. Arpita CSJ

Tanmaya



Barack Obama said: “The future of our nation depends on the education and character of youth. Let us invest in them today so that they can build a better tomorrow for all of us.”

St. Joseph’s Convent Higher Secondary School, Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh, organized a ten-day program in the month of July to focus on child rights, education, environmental sustainability and social justice, led by PRATYeK, a child rights organization that was founded in 2013 by Steve Rocha. The organization’s mission is to “Educate and empower children and relevant stakeholders to build a rights-based, just, inclusive, participatory, equitable, fulfilling, interconnected, and mystical Earth community.”

Inspiring speakers from PRATYeK conducted the seminar for the high school students who were taught about child advocacy in interesting and optimistic ways. The participants were divided into small groups and assigned specific SDGs to work on. They were taught the importance of spreading

awareness and inspired to believe that children can be in change. The students were encouraged to brainstorm solutions, identify local challenges, and develop action plans aligned with their respective goals. The activities sparked vibrant discussions and enabled participants to think





creatively and critically, leading the staff and students to realize that PRATYeK is a great platform, working, interacting, and collaborating with youth to encourage them to achieve the 17 SDGs.

We believe that it is essential for schools to embed justice education into the curriculum. It is very important to teach students the history of social justice movements, the different forms of injustice that exist in the world today, and how they might respond appropriately to make a difference. Justice-embedded education helps students to develop a critical understanding of the

world around them. It also helps students to develop a sense of civic engagement. They learn about the importance of participating in the democratic process, thus empowering them to make a difference in their communities. Justice-embedded education helps in the creation of a just and equitable school environment.

This seminar proved that teachers and students are crucial stakeholders in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and education is the best tool for this. The ten-day workshop on rights-based education motivated all of us to incorporate social

justice, SDGs, secularism and democratic values into our curriculum. These kinds of interactions undoubtedly foster a deep sense of love for the downtrodden and a connection to the planet and humanity. The present generation has the power and the ability to make a difference. We need to tap their energy to create an inclusive and just world. I firmly believe that we should have such programs in our schools to bring new life. This workshop is a platform for all of us to practice the theme of the year 2023-24: "Building the young to build the Nation."

GOOD-HEARTED AND BEAUTIFUL MARCIA

Sr. Anette Moltubakk CSJ

Norway



On Sunday 27 August, the municipality of Fredrikstad, Norway, honored our Sr. Marcia (1911 – 1987) by naming the city’s new electric ferry “Go’vakker Marcia” (Good hearted and beautiful Marcia). Following tradition, the red city ferries are named after important women for or from Fredrikstad. This year it took place during the family



festival called “A Walk in the Park”, with the presence of Mayor Siri Martinsen, Bo Axelsson from the Swedish ship builders and Krå Simonsen, head of the city improvement committee who had the honor of naming the new city ferry.

Representatives from the Sisters of St. Joseph now

living in Oslo were guests of honour. Sister Gunhild Abelns, who accepted flowers from Krå Simonsen, said that this was a great honor for both the order and Sister Marcia’s memory.

The sisters of St. Joseph of Chambéry have worked in Fredrikstad since 1887 when three sisters were

sent from their Norwegian headquarters in Kristiania/ Oslo to run the parish in the city. They cared for all the people in various ways, and opened a modern hospital there in 1924, which was run by the sisters until 1972 when it was taken over by the county, in line with the law. As the transition from home births to hospital births took place, in 1934 the Sisters of St. Joseph employed

their own gynecologist with responsibility for women's health and births. As a result of this, almost two generations of Fredrikstad citizens were born at St. Joseph Hospital, with Sr. Marcia as the competent head of the maternity ward for over 40 years. A trained nurse, she came to Norway from Germany in 1933 and began to work at the hospital after she made her

final vows. When she died on 17 October 1987, the Fredriksstad Blad (newspaper) wrote that "she was a midwife for the whole of Fredrikstad". In its justification for Sr. Marcia's name adorning the new city ferry, Fredrikstad municipality wrote that she was "known for spreading warmth and joy around her, and ensured that mother and child were comfortable in the delivery room".

CHALLENGE OF INTERCULTURALITY

Sr. Maureen CSJ

Nirmala



The Interculturality Meeting, held on 2nd and 3rd September at the Provincial house in Igatpuri brought together members from our various Indian provinces in response to the clarion call given by S. Celine Kalathoor, general councillor.

After a meaningful prayer based on the theme "The beauty of the world lies in the diversity of its people," S. Celine addressed the group focusing on the fact that we ourselves are challenged

to first live interculturality among ourselves.

She gave the example of a monk, who was asked by his disciples: "Who are you?" and the response was: "Once upon a time, I was 'me' but now I am 'you'." This is genuine transformation. This requires a good degree of self-emptying and deep commitment. In intercultural living, it is our transformed selves that will invite others to change and listen to us.

S. Celine introduced the book *Living Mission*

Interculturality by Anthony Gittins. The themes of intercultural living offered the group new insights. Quoting Pope Francis, S. Celine said: "If there is one word that we should never tire of repeating, it is 'dialogue'. We are called to promote a culture of dialogue by every possible means and thus to rebuild the fabric of society."

Each member in the group shared her perspective on Interculturality, expressing joy and willingness to be part of the core group and to help



the report and the meeting concluded with a relevant prayer. As appropriate symbols were placed around the little oil lamp each one expressed her prayer-filled desire for unity in diversity. We moved out, singing whole-heartedly that beautiful song: “Carry your candle and go out to the world.”

Each member experienced a deep sense of joy and commitment as we realized that we, as members of the Interculturality Committee, would be responsible to move the entire body forward. Yes, we are conscious of the fact that our communities, by living interculturality, would reflect, as Sisters of St. Joseph, the communion and unifying love they profess in their lives.

our sisters live interculturality concretely in daily life.

The two days were profitably spent in planning for the years 2023-2025, for our Indian provinces and the Region of Pakistan.

It was awesome to

interact with Sr. Dolores, General Superior, when she motivated the group to launch fearlessly, as the congregation, she added, looked forward with hope and great expectation.

The group finalized



WORLD YOUTH DAY

Sr. Ericka Rodriguez Salvatierra CSJ

Bolivia



World Youth Day (WYD) is the gathering of young people from around the world with the Pope. It is an expression of the universal Church and a special time of evangelization and meeting with Christ, which takes place every second or third year in different countries. Although it has a clearly Catholic identity,

it is open to all, be they close to the church or far away.

As a participant at the WYD, I would like to share my experience as a member of the delegation of the Bishops' Conference of Bolivia, a group made up of priests, sisters and youth animators from the different states of Bolivia.

This participation required two years of preparation and

every delegate to the WYD was given an experience in dioceses of Portugal one week before the official opening.

Our group was sent to the diocese of Aveiros in Portugal, where we met more than five thousand pilgrims coming from different countries. Our delegation was given hospitality in the parish of Santa Joana, where





we were welcomed into the families. This was one of the most beautiful experiences we had. Our presence in the parish community was under the banner of brotherhood/sisterhood, interculturality and sharing daily life with the families, the laity and the youth in various religious, recreational and social activities.

The WYD took place in Lisbon, 1-6 August. We stayed in several neighboring cities, so we had to travel each day by train into Lisbon to participate in various activities of the program. Among the main events were meeting with Pope Francis, stations of the

cross, a visit to the sanctuary of Fatima, the vigil and Mass of being sent forth during which the next WYD in Seoul, South Korea, in 2025, was announced.

Among the many activities there were alternative gatherings: a visit to the City of Joy where there was an exposition of charisms; spiritual direction; musical events; various prayers and the Park of Pardon with confessions; Masses and other prayer activities. The motto for this WYD was “Mary got up and went in haste” (Lk 1,39). It was echoed everywhere.

The message of Pope

Francis, awaited with expectation, encouraged everyone to have no fear because we have a church that has a place for all, a space where all are welcome. It is a church that is clearly not the best, because we are all sinners, but the wonderful thing is that we are called and loved, not as we would like to be but at we are now, with our pain and despite many distractions.

The pope also stressed the idea of vocation: Jesus calls us by name in a personal way. Our name is known in social media and created by algorithms associated with tastes and preferences. All this does not question our uniqueness, but our usefulness. These are the illusions of the virtual world. But Jesus is not like this; he trusts and embraces us.

These are a few of the central ideas in Pope Francis’ message that reverberate in my heart and that I communicate with joy and enthusiasm to the youth, to the sisters and to all who ask about the WYD. Besides being an intercultural global experience, it was for me an experience that strengthened my faith, my vocation and my desire to serve as a Sister of St. Joseph who wants to live the charism of communion among young people.

BRINGING THE CHARISM TO LIFE

Margaret Levasseur

Associate, USA



David (not his real name) had a partial foot amputation due to complications of diabetes. He was unable to work and ineligible for insurance. This meant he could not receive rehabilitation services or visiting nurses, no transportation to appointments and no access to food. He could not walk to a bus stop, could not carry

groceries from a food bank and since he had always worked, had no knowledge of the food services available. He was depressed and receiving behavioral health services.

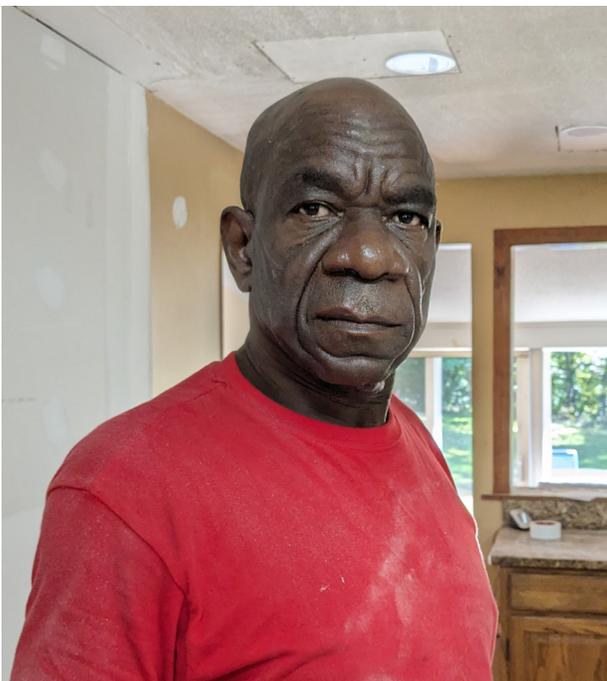
The Community Team of St. Joseph (CTSJ) in Hartford, Connecticut, grounded in the spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph, found ways to respond to these needs. Mark, a registered nurse at the community clinic, asked the question, "Do you think anyone can help him?" David very much wanted our help. He said, "Please help me" and then he did everything that was asked of him. He said all he wanted was to work as a house painter again. Michael gave him rides to appointments and bought him

groceries. He offered friendship that lifted his spirits - maybe the best medicine of all.

Margaret accompanied him to appointments, communicated with his doctors, and helped complete paperwork. We arranged for five healthy meals a week to be delivered to him for 12 weeks. A Food Bank, affiliated with St. Francis Hospital in Hartford, offered fresh vegetables and fruit, meat and fish. They opened their door off schedule and delivered food when needed. Sister Rosemary Wrinn contributed money for a special trip to the grocery store.

Nurses Katherine and Mark assisted with daily wound care when Margaret was away.

St. Francis provided the surgeries and follow-up appointments that were critical to his recovery and healing. Now David's surgical scars are fully healed. He has started painting again and will



be able to do more once he receives his prosthetic shoe.

David and our team feel our connection to God in this modern-day miracle of healing. As Mark pointed out, we feel like disciples. He is joining the community team because he likes the spirit of what we are doing. David acknowledges that “somebody up there is looking out for him” and his heart feels, as he describes it, “jacked up” (energized). He has shed more than a few tears of gratitude. We all have!

We are a group of individuals with a variety of skills. We are not aware of any non-profit organization

that would enable us to do the simple things that need to be done for people like David. We may not be legally connected to the Sisters of St. Joseph, but our hearts are, as we seek to follow their charism.

Experiences like helping David bring the charism to life for us. We are a group of helpers already and want to use this desire to help others, like the sisters of long ago and today.

We help people just as we would help our next-door neighbor. We just follow their lead and what they identify as a need. We listen to strangers tell a painful story; they relate how grateful they are to be

heard. Together we discern whether to respond, if we have the skills to do so, if we want and are able to do it. We pray at the beginning and end of every meeting, especially for those that we are unable to help. We are grateful to Sister Mary Bernard Shanley and Sister Rosemary Wrinn who join us and help us reflect on our experiences.

We can say there is joy in this work. Nothing has felt overwhelming and we feel very connected to each other and to God. We know that God has much better ideas than we do and will keep us from going overboard if we listen well.

NEW SAINTS

Sr. Myriam Gonthier-Maurin	97	Fr-Belg.	15.09.2023
Sr. Maria de Toni	92	Brazil	21.09.2023
Sr. Lilia Virginia	95	Brazil	22.09.2023
Sr. Marie Agnès Soullier	92	Fr-Belg.	26.09.2023
Sr. Adèle du Sacré Coeur Plaisance	97	Fr-Belg.	07.10.2023
Sr. Dona Hoffman	81	USA	11.10.2023
Sr. Mary Pius Vadassery	90	Tanmaya	16.10.2023

ASSURING THE MISSION CONTINUES

Sr. Lorraine Marie Delaney CSJ

Nagpur



In early February 2020, the Providence Global Centre was set up in Hyderabad, India, as an IT office focusing on technology advancing healthcare services. It is involved in research, upgrading, innovation of Providence St. Joseph Health, the third largest Catholic Health Organization in the USA, with its 51 hospitals, 1085 Health clinics, and over 50K healthcare providers. I was invited to assume the role of Head of Mission, India, in most challenging times. Working in a corporate world demanded a totally new mindset which I was obliged to adopt and adapt. I spared neither time nor energy, to set and raise the standards of Providence Global Centre and help it grow from strength to strength. Beginning with only 3 experienced leaders/



software engineers in February 2020, there are now over twelve hundred in 2023, who support, maintain, and

sustain the infrastructure of Providence St. Joseph Health, USA.

Serving in an organization which began during Covid, these past three years provided many opportunities for personal growth, cross-cultural and inter-religious exposure, one-to-one connections which were sacred encounters and offered opportunities for endless creativity.

Being an integral part of Providence Global Centre right from its inception, I am respectfully considered as one of the founders of its culture. I know my energy is contagious, and this kept the

enthusiasm and spirit alive for several caregivers (all employees are referred to as 'caregivers') who would enter my office to seek inspiration from my transformational mission leadership. Many also came with personal sharing of their home front. My colleagues whisper that this is one role in the organization that will be hard to fill owing to the legacy I have established! The high standards I have set pose a challenge for my successors as they take up the mission.

Having crossed the

80th milestone on life's journey, I asked to be relieved on 30 June 2023, after which I 're-tyre' to our Senior Care Facility in Nagpur.

I have ensured that the foundations of Mission integration: Mission Statement, Heritage, Legacy, Core Values, Promise of Providence St. Joseph Health, have been well-laid. My successors, Sisters Rani and Lucy, both Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyon, will have a solid base upon which to build.

MY RICH EXPERIENCES IN ITALY

Sr. Malathi Joseph CSJ

Tanzania



My idea of Italy before my time there was very different from the reality I experienced during the six-month period I recently spent for a programme in Rome. Commuting daily by local

transport offered me diverse possibilities of knowing a little of Italian culture, Italian warmth and open-heartedness, and hospitality to migrants and refugees who struggle to eke out a living by selling odds and ends on

the street. Scores of ethnic groups fill every corner of the city and country.

This was the context in which I lived during the UISG Formation Programme in which I was one of the 45 participants. The



whom we do not know. During my time with our sisters in Rome I both witnessed and experienced the need for flexibility, which is an imperative in every ministry and at all levels. Embracing flexibility and being kind to yourself is an absolute must in formation. I

sessions gave me a deeper understanding of the ministry of formation at a time when the world is rapidly evolving. We were oriented to journal writing and reflection, realizing that it is not only from experience that we learn but from reflecting deeply on that experience. Religious life today invites us to enlarge our tents and to be truly generous in sharing with those in formation a broader knowledge - not just of the world but also of the heart. We face new forms of poverty: trafficking, destruction of the planet, wars and their consequences, migration, climate change, environmental degradation.

Where is our charism leading us today? Most certainly we are to challenge those in formation to move out of their comfort zone and into the marginalized pockets of society. We are to

assist those in formation to use their prophetic voice to promote a culture of care and compassion so they might become effective channels of communion. Those in formation need to risk being vulnerable and embracing all the ways God saves us. We are not human beings having a spiritual experience but rather, we are spiritual beings having a human experience.

The ministry of formation is sacred space for us to build psychological safety and trust. We are challenged to create an environment where those in formation can be open enough to express their feelings, wounds, emotions. The formator is called to listen with understanding, avoid blame, nip negativity in the bud, be inclusive in team decisions and be open to feed back. As Carl Jung has said, in each of us there is another

experienced this in my interaction with our members in the province of Italy. I saw how they concretize the charism in all their interactions, in whatever ministry each one is engaged. I admired their creativity, simplicity and above all their love for mission beyond the walls of their Convent. Their age does not permit them to serve far and wide, but the ministries they are involved in prove that their mission is 'ad gentes.' Each one labours to raise funds for the missions; they offer shelter to refugees; they are compassionate towards them and they reach out to all and sundry with no distinction. Experiencing the degree of their flexibility, their openness and their large-heartedness was a lesson in itself for which I shall always be grateful, thanks to my visit to Italy.

GIRL CHILD: GIFT OF GOD TO HUMANKIND

Sr. Seema Soren CSJ

Tanmaya



Every girl child is the image and likeness of God, a beautiful creature. She has the right to bloom like a flower, flow like a river, swim like a fish, shine like a sun and grow like a tree.

The month of September is a special month to remember

the giftedness of a girl. But it still surprises me that even in this 21st century, our world and country have yet to realize the unique gift of the girl child. When I was in the mission station of Mohankot, Madhya Pradesh, for three years I saw many differences made

between boys and girls in the families. Girls are given less importance for education; they are kept only for household work.

As I was teaching in the school I came across many girls who freely shared the difficulty that after class 8th they would



be given in marriage. As I spoke to them I motivated them that they have a bright future ahead of them and can fulfill their dreams. I gave them examples of great women. They promised me that they would convince their parents that they want to study and fulfill the dreams of their life. I am very happy to receive information from some girls that they finally have done this and are now continuing their studies.

Another story that pains me is of Aruna (name changed) who is just 25 years old with two children, and she is studying only in kindergarten. She was beaten by her husband, a drunkard, and hated by her in-laws. Not able to bear the torture, she divorced him. A courageous and fine

lady, she now works hard to earn her daily bread. With her hard-earned money she bought a scooter so that she can be early to her work. No one can complain about her work. Being a single mother she gives hope to all who are suffering, like showing that without a man a girl can manage everything. God has given her the strength to appreciate her womanhood.

I was personally inspired by a girl named Bhargsetu Sharma, a Zoology student from Vadodara, Gujarat. Her love for animals was remarkable. At the age of 13 she began to rescue animals. She has taken one step at a time through empathy, love and care. When she first saw a dog with six of her newborn

puppies unsheltered with no food, her heart melted with pain and grief and that was the day she decided to dedicate part of her life to stray dogs and other animals. This incident changed her forever and she found a new meaning for life.

These are just some stories though there are many others to support the claim that girls have the qualities of empathy, compassion, kindness and love inbuilt in them and as society we must build opportunities for them to grow.

Every girl has the right to be confident, courageous, compassionate, fearless, to be hope for the hopeless, home for the homeless. Every girl, sister, wife, mother, grandmother is a queen of the earth.

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