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GENERAL COUNCIL

SUMMARY

ONGOING MISSION

Sr. Celine Kalatoor CSJ

General Council



“In the spirit of our founder, following Christ and participating in his mission, we are called, consecrated and sent forth to the forms of ministry which respond to the spiritual and material needs of our time.” (Constitution, p.6)

The Sisters of St. Joseph present around the world are engaged in the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. As St. Teresa of Avila said,

“Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassionately on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.”

Our sisters, on whichever continent they are present, continue to engage themselves in the mission of

GENERAL COUNCIL

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Jesus Christ, convinced that, as St. Oscar Romero said: “God in Christ dwells near at hand to us. . . . Where someone is hungry, there is Christ near at hand. If we could see Christ in the needy one, in the tortured victim, in the prisoner and in each human figure so shamefully thrown by our roadsides we would pick him up like a golden medal to be kissed lovingly. The person is Christ and, in the person, viewed and treated with faith we look on Christ our Lord.”

I was fortunate to live with and witness to the mission of our sisters in São Paulo, Brazil, and I would like to mention a few ways in which the sisters enter and touch the lives of the needy in their area. The sisters, with great love for the less privileged of society

are deeply committed to the cause of the poor. They work with and for people who are materially, socially, economically, and spiritually isolated and poor. It is a priority for the sisters to find time to reach out to the needy in their neighborhoods, listening to their stories and taking care of their basic needs by providing food and other necessary goods. Their concern for the welfare of their ‘dear neighbor’ is evident in their actions and conversations. The sisters, by their lives and charitable actions witness to the Gospel values to the people around them. They follow the Synodal path of journeying together, building communion and listening to what God may be telling them through those whom they serve. They seem to understand well and live

the message of Pope Francis: “This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them.” (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 198).

Christ continues his mission through us today as we try to see through his eyes, speak through his words and love through his love. He gives us the strength and grace to accomplish his mission of healing divisions and reuniting humanity with God in our time and space. Thus, “We are always on mission in all stages of our lives.” (Constitution p.7)

TRAFFICKING “IN OUR OWN BACKYARD”

Sr. Mary Bernard Shanley CSJ

USA



The public revelation in 2011 of sex-trafficking occurring on a 9-10 mile state road near us, called the

Berlin Turnpike, was a wake-up call to action, demanding a local, collective response. One response, offered by the

Archdiocese of Hartford, was a workshop entitled “Stolen Lives: A Gospel Response to Human Trafficking”. Featured



was a video depicting the life circumstances of a trafficked victim and a presentation by the Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants and the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. Additional short presentations included The Underground, an anti-trafficking group. As a follow-up to the workshop, a Human Trafficking Task Force was created, whose task is to educate and promote diocesan parish engagement in anti-trafficking.

The news of trafficking occurring “in our own backyard” prompted members of the US province to attend the workshop. Already involved for many years on a national level with the US/Canada Federation of the Sisters of St Joseph, the province became more active on a local level. Sisters and Associates began working with The Underground to promote awareness and advocacy and to support victims and survivors by filling backpacks with school supplies for children at risk, sending

encouragement cards to survivors, supporting fund raising events, and by praying. I was invited to serve on the diocesan Task Force.

One grassroots response to the situation came from a local Baptist Church, whose members formed teams, drove to motels on that road, and then prayed before speaking to motel owners. This action was the beginning of The Underground. Peculiar to its mission is its call to engage and unite local Christian churches in eradicating trafficking. For over 10 years it has raised extensive awareness, advocated for victims, and provided initial emergency services, short term housing, and ongoing services for survivors, and became an NGO in 2021. With the assistance of a grant and generous donors, it is currently strengthening its mentoring program, in which former survivors mentor others who have been newly freed.

The Underground relies heavily on prayer in its work. Having checked “Pray” in a list of things

to do, I was invited to join the group’s prayer ministry. In this group, a cross-section of Christian traditions, the power of “two or three gathered in my Name” is evident. One example is the concerted effort in prayer made for the dream one member, Dr. Rivera-Godreau, had of opening a clinic specifically for women suffering from trauma caused by abuse. God pulled the dream together, and in April 2022, “Gina Wellness & Healing” opened its doors. The fact that a trauma expert and substance abuse counselor rented space in the clinic and provide supplemental services for the clients is one of several signs of God’s blessing. Regarding the mission of the clinic, Dr. Rivera says, “We believe healing comes from approaching the individuals in all the dimensions that make them human: physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, cognitive. By doing this, and creating a safe space for their progress, we aim to help our patients engage in the journey of healing and well-being.”

COP28 - OUTCOMES AND CONSEQUENCES FOR EUROPE

Helga Haass-Maennle

Norway



The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the supreme decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). All 199

States that are members of the UNFCCC are represented at the COP meeting whose main task is to review progress made by members to limit climate change.

Key commitments and

actions announced by the EU at COP28 in 2023 were to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels this decade, to take action to reduce emissions by 43% by 2030, and set the world on a



COP28 UAE



pathway to reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

The overarching goal of the Paris Agreement, the legally binding international treaty on climate change made in 2015, is to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. COP28 recognized that, by 2030, global greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced by 43% below 1990 levels to limit global warming to 1.5 °C, which was the aim of Europe. A Norwegian TV channel informed us some time ago that the EU has cut only 15% of quota-obligatory emissions in 2023 but is confident that they will reach the target

of a 43% reduction of such emissions by 2030.

COP28 has adopted a decision calling for accelerated short-term action and an orderly transition away from fossil fuels towards climate-neutral energy systems – the first-ever COP decision to address fossil fuels. This is the first time that a UN climate change conference has formally recognized the necessity of moving away from fossil fuels to achieve the Paris Agreement targets, although the mention of fossil fuels faced opposition from oil-producing countries.

However, many countries walked away from the talks frustrated at the lack of a clear call for a fossil-fuel “phase-out” this decade – and at what they

call holes in the text that might enable the production and consumption of coal, oil and gas to continue.

Now, responsibility lies on the EU to translate this COP28 outcome into ambitious work at home. What is needed are concrete timelines for the phasing out of fossil fuels. Germany, which is relying solely on renewable energies but still

is dependent on coal, has a special challenge, whereas countries like France and Sweden count heavily on nuclear power. Nuclear power does not produce carbon dioxide, but what about the nuclear waste?

The COP28 decision also highlights the importance of protecting and restoring nature and ecosystems and enhancing efforts to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030, and invites parties to preserve and restore oceans and coastal ecosystems. For Europe this might mean for example to stop all transport of plastic waste to countries in Southeast Asia which cannot handle it properly. Much of this European plastic waste can be found in oceans and coasts all over the world.

ETHICAL INVESTMENTS

Sr. Apolonia Sulenta CSJ

Brazil



The International Finance Commission, in order to be faithful to its mission of administering and caring for the assets and finances of the Congregation effectively, and aiming to care for the life

and mission of the Sisters, has produced a Document on Ethical and Sustainable Investments.

This document contains very important elements for the proper investment of

the Congregation's financial assets.

The Congregation fulfills its responsibility of sustainable investment as a community of consecrated religious. This means that in





our financial reflections and decisions, we increase our ability to align investment choices with our faith and how our choices affect the lives of others.

The Ethical and Sustainable Investment Statement recommends that we invite our Consultants and Managers to follow this current document and to remain vigilant and inform us of potential portfolio changes.

We are also encouraged by the document to form Investment Committees, as the complexity of the choices requires specific expertise.

The Commission reinforces the importance that all the Congregation's

investments be made in ethical and sustainable companies.

The insistence on this issue is based on the document *Mesuram Bonam* published by the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences in November 2022. In addition to determining criteria for Ethical and Sustainable Investments, this document asks us to be discerning about sensitive issues such as the war industry, pornography, fossil fuel companies, human rights violations, and other issues that have a negative impact on the life of the planet.

The Commission is also making sure that the

Document reaches all the Sisters of the Congregation by passing it on to the members of the Commission in their different countries.

At the present moment, all the Provinces of the Congregation are committed to circulating the document to as many Sisters as possible so that they can follow it and be aware of it.

Through the reports sent to it, the Commission has been following with great care the work that the Provinces have been doing

We are grateful to all the Sisters who are making the objective of our Document a reality.

TRACES OF TENDERNESS

Sr. Antonia Constantina Mandro CSJ

Bolivia



On May 16, 2024, with the inter-institutional support of the Latin American and Caribbean Conference of Religious, the Bolivian Episcopal Conference, the Bolivian Conference of Religious (CRB), other

ecclesiastical groups and other congregational institutions such as Vision of the Word, a march was held in the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, to raise voices with the slogan 'Changing History, Zero Violence, 100% Tenderness'.

The march is a strategy of the Centering on Childhood Program, which takes place every five years. It tours the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean with the symbol of a comet, which signifies the dreams and future of children,



with freedom and better living conditions. This year, the tour began in February in Mexico and will end in Chile in July 2024.

The Children’s Center Maintenance Program is present throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. It aims to train, interact with, and develop the capacities of its collaborators in order to transform reality and guarantee public advocacy from the perspective of laws and rights.

The program helps to raise awareness of the situation of violence against

thousands of adolescent boys and girls, to achieve prevention and protection based on faith with the principle of life, love, and tenderness.

As Pope Francis said during his General Audience on January 29, 2020, “A revolution of tenderness is needed! We run the risk of remaining trapped in a justice system that doesn’t allow us to lift ourselves up easily and that confuses redemption with punishment. Tenderness is the unexpected way of doing justice.”

The program also

proposes the signing of a Pact for Tenderness with its five general principles: 1) Cultivate a relationship of trust and reciprocity; 2) Care for physical, mental, and spiritual integrity; 3) Listen with sensitivity and promote participation; 4) Comfort the suffering and promote emotional care; 5). Cultivate spirituality and faith.

We believe that structural and cultural change is needed to change the culture of violence into a culture of care, good treatment, and prevention.

NEW SAINTS

Sr. Scholastica Thengummoottil	101	Pachmarhi	30.04.2024
Sr. Dolores Ferrero	102	Italy	05.05.2024
Sr. Marie Luc Lucette	80	France	11.05.2024
Sr. Maria Eva Soffiatti	94	Brazil	24.05.2024
Sr. Susanne Pierre	103	Belgium	30.05.2024
Sr. Tomasina	84	Italy	01.06.2024
Sr. Juliana Mankootthil	94	Pachmarhi	10.06.2024
Sr. Benjamina Maria	89	Brazil	11.06.2024
Sr. Zandira Luvison	89	Brazil	11.06.2024
Sr. Ernesta Guzzo	99	Brazil	12.06.2024
Sr. Lilia Maria Berton	94	Brazil	20.06.2024
Sr. Liliana Ciotta	91	Brazil	20.06.2024

EMBRACED BY INTERCULTURALITY

**Sr. Maria Inez Leite Ramos,
Sr. Talita Angélica da Silva Santos,
Sr. Regina Celia List, CSJ**



Brasil

The inter-congregational community of Boa Vista do Cuçari is located in the Amazon region of Parà, in the north of Brazil. This community was formed thanks to a dream of serving in the challenging missions in this place with the desire to be a presence in the whole Church, as was the founding inspiration of our Congregation.

We have been here for 10 years, accompanying 48 communities, including those on the mainland, the riverside, and floodplain (totally above the waters of the rivers). We have people who love the Word of God, who like to meet in the community, who share, who are festive and mystical. Our biggest challenges are the distances between the communities, transportation, communication, the lack





of basic sanitation, the precariousness of education and health, as well as drinking water.

Our religious community is made up of Sisters Inez and Regina Célia (Chambéry) and Talita (Italian Istituto). We live in this reality, bringing with us our three cultures from the south, southeast, and northeast of Brazil. Even more, we are of different ages with religious formation received at different times. A good mix!

This intercultural coexistence is very rich. Moreover, the historical movement of society helps us to open up to what is different from us. It offers us the possibility of opening up to the new that the other person offers us. It takes us out of our comfort zone, challenges us to

exercise patience, leads us to learn about cultural dynamics, to understand the other person better, reducing inner judgments that can distance us in fraternal coexistence. We learn to listen more, to dialogue, without parameters that condition us to a single way of being and/or living. We understand that clinging to our own way of seeing the world is not helpful and that we need to be open to the newness that the other person offers us.

With the people of God in our pastoral area, we have noticed the opposite movement: the fact that people find it difficult to identify the characteristics of their culture – or even deny them – leads them to close themselves off to newness – be it religious, cultural or in the

spheres of social organization.

For us, the question always remains: How far can the Gospel permeate this culture without attacking it? Without thinking that we are more knowledgeable, superior, and the holders of true knowledge? How can we be inserted into this culture without having a colonialist mentality? This is our great challenge!

The line between cultural interaction and violence against those who are different from us is very thin. The way forward is always to open ourselves up to experiences that will renew us and enrich us as people in a highly intercultural world. We need to go, go out, meet, see, and live together... just as the master Jesus invites us to do.

LIVING A CALL OF COMMUNION IN PAKISTAN

Sr. Sumaira CSJ

Pakistan



The region of Pakistan is collectively, in collaboration, living a call of the 2021 General Chapter which states "The associates and our lay partners continue to enrich our congregation in countless ways. Their sharing of our spirituality and charism and their involvement with

our various apostolates complement the outreach initiatives taken by the sisters." We Sisters of St. Joseph are privileged to have a rich charism and spirituality of oneness in our wounded fragmented world; unity and communion are the tools to become all-inclusive.

In Pakistan, Sr. Kiran

Ahmad, the coordinator of associates, is working collectively with the associates on how to be more effective as a synodal church.

On 26th May Sr. Kiran and Sr. Maria met with our associates in Lahore. The Lahore community works in collaboration with a group of 12 lay partners. During their



meeting they developed their objectives for 2024: how they will be a catalyst, living a call of communion by reaching out to the needy. They live our spirituality and charism in their families and workplace, very content to be in close contact with the sisters.

As Sr. Kiran reported, the upcoming July zoom session will give continuity to the recommendation of the 2021 General Chapter, with the International Reflection Group of Associates and sisters offering an ongoing formation program for all interested associates and lay collaborators. The Group

has circulated the themes for ongoing formation with this year beginning with the first theme: "Charism and spirituality of the Sisters of Saint Joseph and the concrete experience in different ministries/commitments in a synodal church." It is a need of our time to be aware of various realities around us as a call of the synodal church to be one body. Our CSJ associates often participate in weekly, monthly and yearly events/celebrations, planning sessions/seminars with sisters and are now preparing for the July meeting via zoom.

This is a valuable

initiative developed by Sisters Maria Cristina Gavazzi, Elisa Zuanazzi, Rosalia Favero, Francis Regis and Kiran Ahmad and associates Dirley Serra Negreiros, Elizabeth Quinonez Guterrez, Maria Sundstrom and Angela Baldi. They are developing a way to collaborate as a global family using the Zoom platform.

In Pakistan the communities in Multan and Quetta also work to join others on a platform to make our apostolic life more effective and progressive, following our patron St. Joseph, the role model for going the extra mile.



FORMATION AND LIVING THE CHARISM OF THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH

Vinícius Tenedini, Collaborator and Member of the Committee



Brazil

The program of formation and living the Charism has the beautiful mission of bringing all the collaborators of the Province of Brazil a deeper understanding of the main elements of the Charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph. It is a formative program

because we believe that a collaborator who understands the meaning of their work will be able to contribute more efficiently and effectively to the mission. During two days, together with Resource Person Mariana Rogoski, we worked on planning two of the three

stages of the program, the Welcome and the Immersion. The program also has another in-depth stage, called Adhesion.

The Welcome stage is the first step of the program, as it covers the introduction to the history and charism of the



Institute, the organizational structure, the proposed values, and the charism's own way of interpersonal relationships, decision-making, and caring for others and the planet. The main characteristic of the Welcome is that it is a standardized common moment for the entire Province, following a guide established by the Committee and approved by the Provincial Council. In the Immersion stage, employees will have the opportunity to take part in projects that will help them mature in their knowledge of the charism so that they are better equipped to carry out the mission in the sector to which they belong. The Immersion stage includes six themes: Patrimony, Mission, Ecclesial Community, Human Formation, and Vocation.

We will have suggestions for planning each theme, taking into account the pace of each unit and the target audience, all of whom are collaborators.

Adhesion consists of connection with the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph, through the discovery of the vocation of men and women who feel inspired by this way of following Jesus and living

the Gospel. At the level of the Province, the Adhesion stage is very well organized by the Associates and we hope that more people will take part.

According to the schedule, in August this year, managers and Human Resource personnel will follow a livestream to begin their formation and present the program.



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