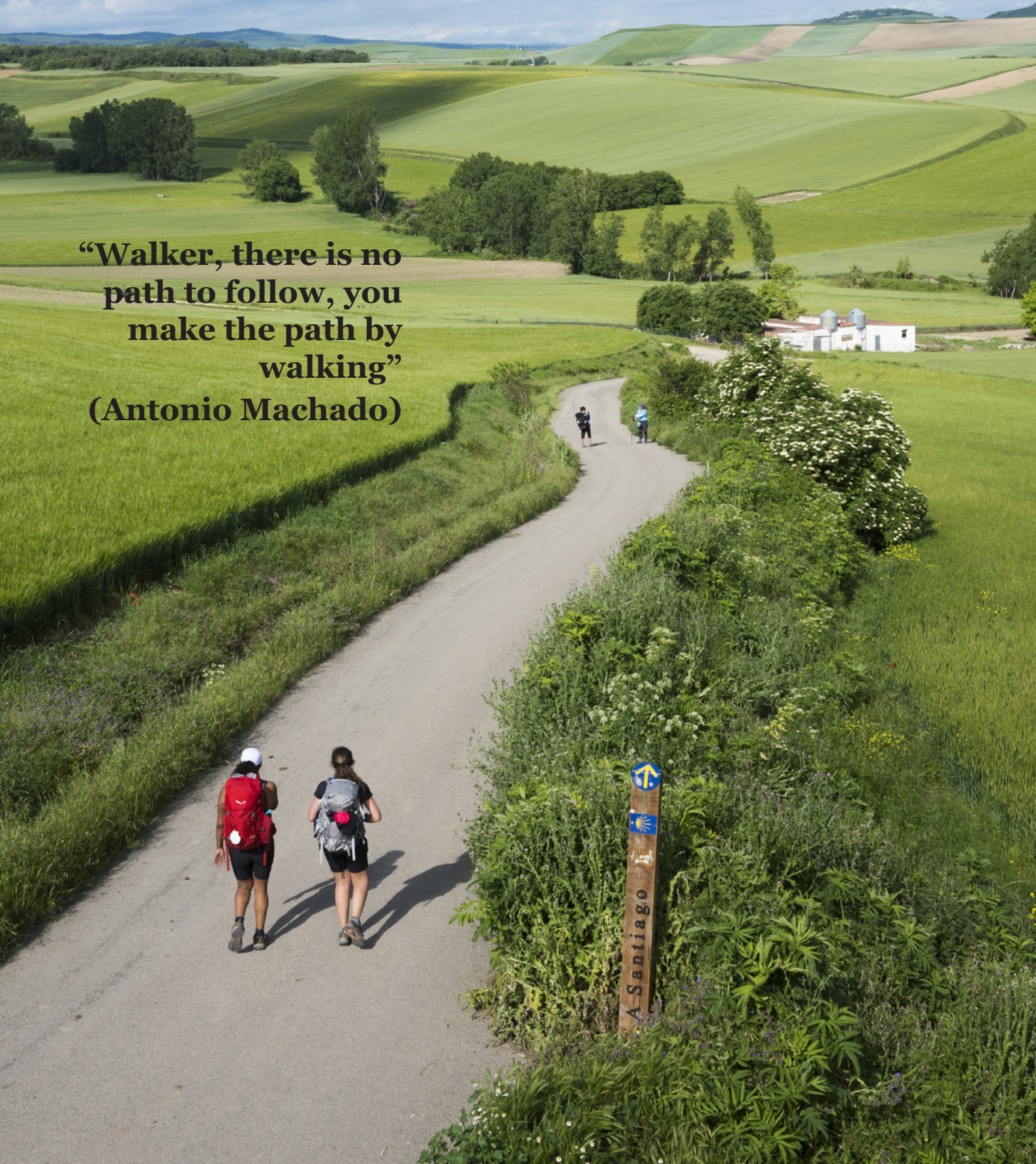


#ASSUMPTA

Religious of the Assumption magazine

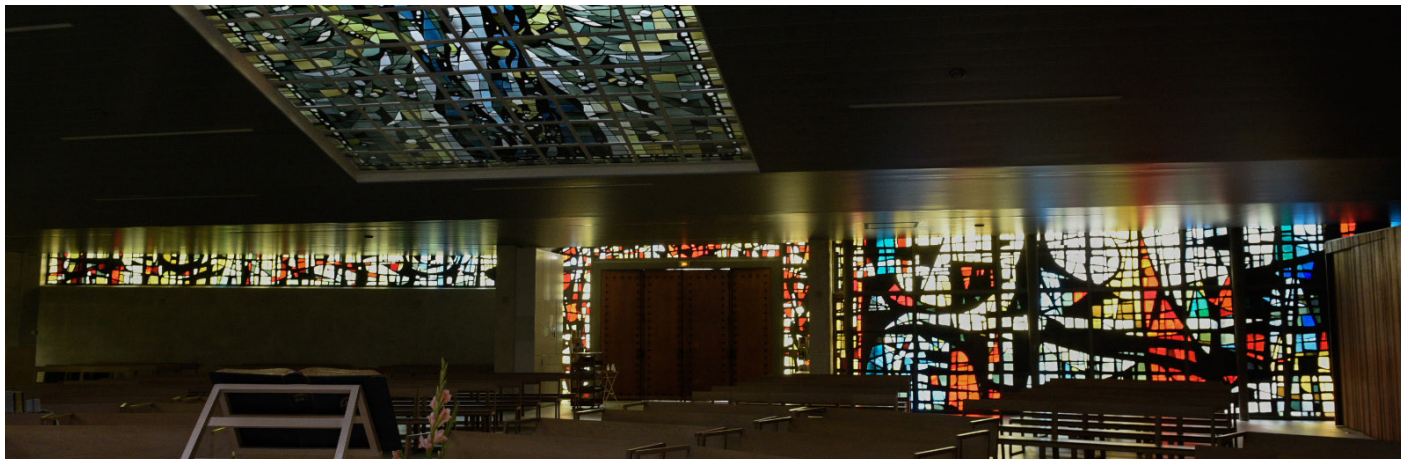
April 2024 - N°11

**“Walker, there is no
path to follow, you
make the path by
walking”
(Antonio Machado)**



summary

"Each one of us has a mission on earth" (Marie Eugenie's credo)



#ASSUMPTA

Year 2024 - n° 11

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International meeting of Assumption Together

editorial

To accompany



“All grown-ups were once children” (Saint-Exupéry). And how did they become grown-ups? At Assumption, we have been entrusted with the mission to educate. To speak of education means to have and live hope.

In the noble mission of education, words are of vital importance because they are addressed to a You. Education is a dialogue between many people: pupils, students, teachers, families, non-teaching staff and, of course, all the people who are part of the pupil's immediate reality and daily life. People who are more distant can also have an influence as they are also part of the reality of life in their towns and countries. At the same time, thanks to the mobile devices we have access to, globalization shortens the distances across the world and brings external realities closer to us. This also feeds the dialogue.

The Word of God gives us examples of how people accompanied each other such as Ruth who accompanied Naomi: How the disciples responded to the call of Jesus to be with him; God accompanied his people; His friend John and his mother Mary accompanied Jesus at the foot of the cross. Each of us is so precious to the Creator that “He has entrusted his angels to watch over us”. We are very precious.

It has been and continues to be extremely important that in our mission of education we bring out as much of our students' talent as possible so that they be active participants in history. This is our obligation as educators born of freedom and love for those who have been entrusted to us and for them to know that they do not walk alone.

To accompany in the process of educating means knowing that you are a secondary player in the personal story of another Son of God. The protagonist is another person, who builds the story of their life with others and with Another. Accompanying our students means kneeling before the Presence of a life that is discovering the world. Accompanying them means helping them use their compass and ask profound questions. Profound questions about: who, with whom, why, how, for what and for whom I exist. These questions are powerful driving forces in the search for meaning. Support means trust. The only way to know that we have trust is to trust. There can be situations of

frustration and loss of trust. By lifting our eyes to look again at the person who is growing up and discovering life helps us to begin again.

Support has a lot to do with keeping pace. Not in front, not behind, but alongside. When you're along their side, you listen well and walk without fatigue; you can look each other in the eye. It's not a question of giving recipes or instructions like on video tutorials. It's about pointing out the Light so that each person can see their own personal and individual path.

Providing support requires us to live in truth, without a superhero-mask or a filter that enhances us. By being truthful, students see us as people they can rely on, despite our fragility and poverty. Accompanying means devoting time and making us aware, once again, that we are not the protagonists.

In schools like ours, our desire to make Jesus Christ known and loved leads us to experience with some of our pupils the grace of being able to accompany them in their search for God. We must never forget to remain humble in the face of people and never usurp God's place. To accompany is not to model ourselves on the image of the accompanier. Each of us has already been modelled in the image and likeness of God the Creator. Pastoral and tutorial accompaniment is an essential component of our way of educating in an integral way. Furthermore, it is dynamic and adapts to reality.

“What is characteristic of our spirit is that it leaves each one their specificities”. (Instr. 10.06.1877) To accompany is a verb that respects the thinking of our Mother Foundress, Saint Marie Eugénie. It's not only about respect for the legacy we've received, but it's also about the ability to bring it alive.

As adults, we have all been children who needed to be accompanied. With age, time and history, children become adults who still need to be accompanied. Accompanying life requires no particular age. All our life, we accompany all life by loving and serving.

SISTER ANA ALONSO

Province of Spain
Original Spanish

general community

“We are in a period that coincides with a series of re-readings in preparation for the General Chapter, a time to observe the impact of the decisions and choices made as a Congregation.”

As we move towards Easter, our prayer brings us face to face with the mystery of the Cross, the paschal mystery at the heart of our faith! The Cross is the place of definitive revelation that God is love and we welcome this with faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, with a desire to be born into divine life.

On the road to the General Chapter: the latest news from the General Council informed you of the dates of the provincial chapters that were concentrated in the months of December 2023 and January 2024. Sr. Rekha had the pleasure of participating in the one in Spain from December 26 to 30.

These moments of grace allowed each Province, enlightened by the Spirit of the Lord, to choose the delegates to the 30th General Chapter. The theme of this chapter is: Impelled by the SPIRIT, in dialogue with our realities, we discern new paths of synodality for our time. METANOIA – PROPHETIC MISSION – CULTURE OF CARE. It will take place in the Mother House in Paris-Auteuil, from June 29 to July 28, 2024.

A simple and strong community life is a source of joy: the beginning of the year was marked by the celebration of life, since we celebrated the birthday of our Sr. Irene Cécile who, each time with her humor, her sense of joy and celebration, gives us the opportunity to experience the presence of Jesus in our midst.

The sisters' visits to the Mother House are often favourable occasions to celebrate and share the news of our missions. It is in this context that we welcomed the team that is working on the survey, in preparation for the 2024 General Chapter: Sr. Odessa, Sr. Illuminata, Sr. Cathy, Sr. Mercedes and Sr. Françoise.

Sr. Fe Emmanuel was unable to come to Paris for the meeting, but she was able to join online at times. It is with gratitude that we continue to salute the dedication and continuous search of each sister on the team to carry out this arduous work to the end.

Communion with the Local and Universal Church : The welcome of the Archbishop of Paris, Msgr. Laurent Ulrich, on February 12, plunged us back into the origins of



Sister Rekha in Spain with lay people



Invitation of the Archbishop of Paris, Mgr Laurent Ulrich



Visit to Cuba



Visit to Cuba



Visit to Cuba



Visit to Cuba - with priest Nonio



the congregation. Sister Rekha explained this in her welcoming remarks at the beginning of the Eucharist: "As our Congregation was founded in Paris, it is important for us to be in special communion with the Church of this diocese. In fact, it was the Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur de Quelen, who, in 1839, authorized the installation of the first community of the Assumption, near the Church of Saint Sulpice. It was also an Archbishop of Paris, Monsignor Affre, who received the first Constitutions in 1840. Thank you, Your Excellency, for accepting our invitation. Your presence reminds us of our roots. As Daughter of St. Marie Eugenie, we are Daughters of the Church and this is reflected in the different realities and missions in which our communities are implanted. »

Sharing the Word of God: Sr Rekha had the privilege of transcending the boundaries of the four continents of the Congregation and reaching out to the students of the Parola di Dio – an Online Bible Study Group (for the laity) in Melbourne, Australia. There were more than 100 lay participants for her online reflections on John's Gospel (January 2024).

Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC_ OTC): In January, Sr Rekha had an online meeting of

the members of the Office of Theological Concerns of FABC on "Synodal Experiences of the Asian Churches" to deepen the reflections on synodality. They will have another in-person meeting in Malaysia in May.

Visit to the Community in Cuba: Sisters Rekha and Sandra visited Cuba from the 27th of January to the 5th of February. They visited different little Cristian communities and the two parishes where the sisters participate. They also met with the Assumption Together members of Cumanayagua, Guaos and Esperanza (the one that closed recently). They had interesting meetings with the Apostolic Nuncio Mons. Giampiero Gloder and Mons. Arturo Gonzalez, Bishop of Sainte Claire's dioceses.

They are very grateful for the presence of Sr Cony, Provincial of the Province of America Central and Cuba with them. The visit was followed by an "Online greeting" with all the sisters, a meeting with the Superiors (CPP), and concluded with a meeting with the Provincial Council.

Sr Rekha writes about her experience: "As the canonical visit was online, we, the General Council,

Votes renovation



Feast of M^a Eugenia - end of the mass



Sister's Leela and sister's Claire Myriam birthday



Feast of M^a Eugenia - mass



wanted to visit the entire province. However, the political instability and other problems in different countries have made it impossible for us to do so. I thank God that Sandra and I could visit our sisters in Cuba. This was my first visit to Cuba, and the experiences in Cuba were very touching and challenging. It has transformed me, and I returned to Auteuil as a different person – more energized and renewed in my passion for God's mission of JPICS. I admire our sisters' simple lifestyle and commitment and have experienced the prophetic presence of religious life in Cuba. Despite poverty and other social issues, people seem to be very happy and had always a smile on their faces. I was moved by the generosity of the people and their sense of solidarity. We received a warm welcome everywhere and enjoyed Cuban fraternal hospitality. The life-witness of the Church - Bishops, Priests, Sisters, and Laity - proclaims the evangelical hope in our challenging times."

Internationality or interculturality: Since February 20, 2024, 15 young sisters of 8 nationalities are in Auteuil for a two and a half month session. Christ continues to choose apostles from among us "to be with him" and to introduce them gradually into his way of life, to confirm them in their definitive YES to the Assumption.

International sessions are auspicious times to rekindle this gift, to recognize our human inclinations, and to take steps that help us to take advantage of differences in order to grow in faith and love!

The gift of internationality comes at a price: The seven juniors will soon leave us and will leave a great void. We really appreciated their dynamism, perseverance and open-mindedness. Our communities can become true schools of love where, instead of threat, difference enriches and fosters communion, growth

in the spirit of family and a common future.

Above all, Mother Marie Eugenie invites us to admire the richness of our internationality. She recommends: "... I also recommend you, my sisters, to keep together that fraternal bond which is so powerful, that closeness of hearts in unity which means that, as sisters, we must love one another more than we love others. Soon we will leave each other, some of us are going very far away, but our Lord is a sweet and strong bond to keep us united if we ask Him..."

Living by the Spirit of God: Together, at the general level, we have been "focussed": listening to the Spirit, listening to the rich and diverse experiences of each of our provinces and their local realities, listening to the calls of the world and of the Church in order to "go forward together where the Spirit wants to lead us".

But also, listening to the collaborators within the commissions, which favors the participation of the greatest number of sisters and lay people.

We have been encouraged by the breath of the Spirit throughout the synodal movement to which the Church invites us and the Congregation has tried to follow suit, a path of conversion for a common advancement!

Over the past six years, the #Assumpta and Assumpta Journals have responded to the desire to strengthen family spirit. This has led us to greater communication and sharing of congregational experiences. It is also a source of life and missionary zeal in every Province.

We are in a period that coincides with a series of re-readings in preparation for the General Chapter, a time to observe the impact of the decisions and choices made as a Congregation. We discover how

God's invisible hand leads us through history. We let ourselves be inspired by Mother Marie Eugenie who, ten years after the foundation of the Congregation, had the ability to recognize that life and experience clarify things and set milestones: "It seems to me that I understand two things that have never been united before in my mind, namely, that Jesus Christ asks me to live by his Spirit, but that this Spirit being par excellence a spirit of gentleness, of joy, of mercy, this life must be all joyful, happy near Him, and I must carry myself to it with great freedom of heart, with the most joyful love of my soul, banishing restraint, anxiety, and any trouble at having failed to do so."

The feast of Saint Mary Eugenie was celebrated on Saturday, March 09, 2024: It is with gratitude that we found each other, the two communities of Auteuil enlarged by the sisters in international session. Sr. Eliette, from the Province of Central America Cuba, renewed her vows in the hands of Sr. Rekha.

Our brothers and sisters of the Assumption family honored us with their presence at the Eucharist celebrated by Father Fabien Lejeusne, AA Provincial of Europe, and at the festivities that followed.

The next day, we extended the feast with the celebration of the birthdays of Sister Leela and Sister

Claire Myriam, two Elders of our community, attentive to us all. May these lives offered to the Lord, in the fidelity of daily life and the passion to extend the Kingdom of God, strengthen us in love.

We give thanks to the Lord for the mission carried out in his name, and we entrust to his mercy the journey of living metanoia, the prophetic mission and the culture of care, with the assurance that God will transform into grace what we entrust to his mercy.

SISTERS REKHA, SANDRA, ISABELLE, MARTHE AND IRENE

General Community

Session of perpetual vows 2024



education

The human person center of education

“Putting people back at the centre means putting their value and uniqueness back at the centre”

The issues on how we can reflect on the centrality of the human person in a populous world, and whether it is still useful to consider this question and to make people aware of it are elaborated in the Proposal for Reflection by Pope Francis and cited in the guidelines for development of the Global Educational Pact.

Reasons for Questioning

The prerequisite for this reflection is to recognise that there is a crisis at hand! It is important that from the very outset, the gravity of the crisis be noted. This is a moment of existential discomfort much like the dizziness one may feel when looking into an abyss, an asymptotic moment when we realise how impermanent the nature of what we thought we had achieved is. It's a time for examining and seeking solutions to protect oneself, but also for finding paths to global salvation. It is above all, a decisive moment. And according to Pope Francis, it is precisely in the face of crises that an opportunity arises. We need an 'education in crisis' for a time to change course; we need to live through crises, to be able to confront and prevent them from turning into conflicts.

“Society” and “Person”: the crux of the issue

The permanent crisis we are now facing is societal. The issues related to the relationship between the crisis of society and the centrality of the person represent a challenge: that of permanence. How continuity may be ensured is an issue to be addressed. Due to our mortality, the concept of education is perceived as offering a mode of transmission - but the transmission of what? In this regard, we are referring here to everything that surrounds the person or affects their existence. Education offers humankind to society and society to humankind.

Hence, this concerns a person's experience within the temporality of their existence (past-present-future) in the quest for new pathways. If the very nature of the human condition is that “each new generation grows up in a world that is already old”, then education is the bridge between tradition (already this past must be transmitted) and a guarantee for the future. Every child is a new constituent offering himself to us and asking to be taught everything we know while waiting to see if they can retain or even enrich this legacy. Indeed, “the essence of the problem and also the essence of education stems from the fact of being born into the world”. People and the society they constitute change and evolve. Education is the mark of humankind's historicity, or in other words, of humankind's evolution, whereas the historicity of society is expressed in politics.

Moreover, the people who make up society find themselves having to face situations of “ecological disaster, usurpation of land, distortion of relations of solidarity and social cohesion, the bewitchment of our intelligence, pollution of nature, and death to God...” . A careful reading of society reveals a context characterised by threats to people from the “modes of production to anthropological poverty” particularly by relegating people to the fringes of society. It is the reason why there is a fundamental need to place the person at the very heart of the matter.

Some of these threats or hegemonies are listed below:

- Neoliberal capitalism and its dictatorship of impermanence, and programmed obsolescence, so that we leave a little bit of ourselves in everything we touch or that comes our way.
- The evils of racism and tribalism that cause discomfort about being oneself,



enduring oneself, and therefore enduring the “other” whom we blame for not being who we want them to be, or for making us too aware of who we are (and not simply who we are not).

- Patriarchy and the strange question of how to make room for women when they are persons in their own right.
- The Anthropocene, or the moment when humanity has created a geological epoch in their own right through the impact of their forces on the transformation of the Earth, rivalling and sometimes surpassing the forces of nature.
- Infocracy is the new power with access to information to monitor, manipulate, and even predict.
- The globalisation of criminal violence.
- Public policy is the source of crisis.
- A new global ethic that calls into question even the traditional elements of anthropology, blurring even further the image of the human person in their quest for identity.

From the Periphery to the Centre: some possible solutions

There is only one response to these hegemonies, which is resistance. In other words, “the militant indoctrination of the peripheral masses to their structural strangulation”, “the refusal of the peripheral multitudes to be reduced to the role of tools for the production, maintenance, and reproduction of egoism and avarice (...)” .

Putting people back at the centre means putting their value and uniqueness back at the centre of formal and informal educational processes, enabling the highlighting of the dignity and the educational opportunities they represent, so that their rights, respect, and importance are enshrined. This involves

constant listening, the practice of an inclusive and thoughtful education that takes reality in hand (situated learning) and is attentive to openness to the Transcendent in every person (Gn 3:9: “Where are you?”), collaboration with the family in the spirit of “Fratelli tutti” and “Laudato si”, but above all avoiding the pitfall of filiarchy; in short, practising pedagogy in the image of Jesus who welcomes, cares for, defends, loves, and forgives.

The Pitfall of Filiarchy

Filiarchy can be summed up as the theory of the “child-king” (children who make excessive demands on their parents.) It is one of the psycho-pedagogical approaches that emerged from the failure of certain modern methods of education that were burdened by the nagging issue of failure at school. According to Hannah Arendt, this is based on pedagogical approaches that see the child's world as autonomous, with the adult simply assisting the child. Authority is transferred to the child or, in fact, to the group and not to the individual child. In the same vein, there is a pernicious substitution of learning for doing (under the cloak of know-how), and confusion between work and play. This leads to other forms of crisis. After all, a child is not destined to remain a child; he or she is “a new human being and in the process of becoming one” . Hence, the job of adults is to prepare them for the adult world, but the question remains of how this can be done by keeping the child in a world where the idea of evolution has been removed. What if we didn't take the child out into the light, letting him hide in the discretion of the family rather than exposing him to the light of a world into which he is not integrated and which abandons him while pretending to develop his autonomy? Collaboration with families is more important than ever.

FRANÇOIS-XAVIER LUFUTA TSHIBANDA
MPIKO Secondary School
Democratic Republic of Congo

echo of the Archives

“Synodality works with creativity!”

The classification of documents from the different Provinces

The Intermediate Archives room is bustling with activity at the moment! Sr. Marie Yvonne carries out the pre-classification of documents from our different Provinces. She traveled mostly in Africa, an opportunity to give thanks for the fruitfulness of the mission in all the countries where the Assumption has sent missionary Sisters.

The Bible Camps, the support of the Sisters of Notre Dame de l'Eglise, the first foundations in Central Africa: what a life!

It is also with emotion that we put in order all the documents concerning the events in Rwanda in 1994: hundreds of letters sent and received by Sister Clare Teresa, who was then Superior General. With the Rwandan Sisters, with all the Sisters and friends of the Congregation, with other Congregations, with journalists and members of NGOs: a whole network of incredible solidarity. This gave us the idea to work on this theme and start putting together elements for a future publication.

Spirituality session for the Sisters of Rwanda-Chad

For a long time now, Sr. Marthe Ntuyumve, Provincial of Rwanda-Chad, had the idea of a session on the theme “return to the sources of our spirituality” for the Sisters of her Province. This session took place via zoom, in October 2023. They were two very enriching days, which allowed us to deepen the RA identity for today by looking over the texts of Marie Eugenie. It was both a Provincial experience, since all the Sisters participated in it, and a Communitarian experience, since each Community deepened what was shared during the work in groups.

Following are some elements of the final sharing which made it possible to synthesize the reflection on the theme of synodality:

The Community of Birambo: In a circle... each aware of her strong point to build up the Community in A spirit of synodality. (cf. Illustration #1)



Nyange



Birambo



Sister Nancy in the archives



The Gikondo Community: A stem (the Community) with different branches (the members of the Community) and of all sizes, of different ages (complementarity) but inseparable from the stem... (cf. Illustration #2)

The Community of Musanze: Bees form a very organized society. They live in colonies. In a hive, thousands of bees live together and help each other attain a common goal. The result of their joint work is honey, which is good for the health, as you well know. So, to achieve this result, the work of each bee is important and irreplaceable. In the Community we are called to go through the same process for greater life and to live out Synodality. (cf. Illustration #3)

The Nyange Community: We are strong and yet fragile beings. We are called to recognize and support each other in fulfilling each one's responsibility. When I am fragile today, the one who is strong supports me with her affection, her help, her solidarity....

As you see, synodality works with creativity! Thank you to the Sisters from Rwanda-Chad for their wonderful participation and for their perseverance despite some internet connection hitches!

Sessions in East Africa

Sister Véronique went to East Africa in January 2024. The aim was to bring together the Communities by Dioceses (i.e., 3 regions: 2 Dioceses in Tanzania: Moshi and Singida and Kenya) in order to experience a session with the Sisters on the Spirituality and Identity of the Religious of the Assumption, and a session on the Sources of Transformative Education with teachers and all those working in schools. Sessions with Assumption Together were also planned in certain locations. A real marathon but an immense joy! The great desire to renew oneself in a deeper way of living the project of Saint Marie Eugenie could be seen in the eyes and in the hearts of the laity and of the Sisters. It confirmed the great apostolic dynamism which gives a picture on how to live the spirituality of the Incarnation and the call to joyful detachment.

Simplicity, generosity, service, freedom, commitment to justice, natural virtues dear to our foundress, found echoes in the shared experiences.

The discovery of the Province's Archives and the first two places of foundation, Mandaka (see Treasures of the Archives n°16) and Maili Sita, were also a real joy for an archivist! Joy to see that the Maili Sita school, 50 years after the departure of the Sisters, has kept the Assumption logo, embellished with some local symbols. Joy of reading the annals and letters linked to these foundations, with Sr. Nancy, the local archivist.

SISTER VÉRONIQUE THIÉBAUT

Archivist of the Congregation
Original French

ama

Not too late to share neither too early to serve

“ It makes us creative and impels us to heed all the appeals of the world and to find new ways of answering them. ”

St. Marie Eugenie says “Every one of us has been given a mission: to bring the Father’s Kingdom into the lives of others,” she added by saying “Every detail of our life is the object of a divine thought and that thought is always one of love”: it makes us creative and impels us to heed all the appeals of the world and to find new ways of answering them.

Jesus Christ came to the world for the sake of others and to give salvation to others. In this case he sacrificed himself for the sake of others. The young people are being called on this mission of self-sacrifice just like Jesus Christ did when he came to this world. They are being called to give their lives to help others who need their assistance.

St. Marie Eugenie stated that “ Love never say it is enough.” To the young, it is a call that they keep discovering the momentum, they open themselves to give and share their life with others for others to get light. Young people are being inspired by the writings and reflections of St Marie Eugenie to keep discovering that to give oneself is a source of inner joy. Therefore, it’s a call to all young people in our modern society to volunteer to be kind and generous to others just like Jesus Christ showed us.

The concept of self-sacrifice for God or others is deeply rooted in our religious way of life. And while the benefits of such sacrifices can vary based on individual beliefs and perspectives, here are some benefits that young people can get that are often associated with self-sacrifice:

Self-sacrifice for others or for God can help young people to feel a sense of deep spiritual fulfillment and connection. In this way they get to align their actions with their values and beliefs, fostering a sense of purpose and satisfaction. This on the overall changes their ways of living for the greater good of the society while discovering themselves.





Self-sacrifice to serve others or to serve God, is at most times observed as an act of selflessness and moral integrity. It is seen as evidence of a commitment of putting the needs and well-being of other people above personal needs, which in turn can contribute to personal growth and character development. To young people this is among what they need to live in our modern ever-changing world.

When young people sacrifice themselves, they can reflect genuine concerns for the welfare of others by promoting feelings of empathy and compassion. This kind of action can help to foster a sense of interconnectedness with humanity while contributing to build firm and caring communities.

It's always important to note that the sacrifices that are made for the benefit of others always have significant positive impact on the society. This is because it can inspire as well as motivate others to follow a similar path, creating a ripple kind of effect of kindness, generosity and altruism.

Personal growth and transformation are another benefit that young people often achieve from self-sacrifice for the sake of others. Note that sacrificing one self most times involves stepping outside one's comfort zone and facing challenges. Through this process, individuals get a chance to experience personal growth, develop resilience and gain a deeper understanding of their own strengths and capabilities.

From the teaching of St Marie Eugenie as well as many religious teachings, self-sacrifice for God or others can lead to eternal rewards in the afterlife. This is a teaching that has been carried from the teaching of Jesus Christ. At most times this belief provides comfort and hope as it suggests that the temporary sacrifices made in this life will be rewarded in the next.

When young people are engaging themselves on the service of self-sacrifice, they are naturally fulfilling religious or moral obligations. For some people, self-sacrifice for God or others may be seen as a religious or moral duty. Fulfilling these obligations can bring a sense of peace, contentment as well as a stronger connection to one's faith or moral code

Young people can be on the frontline to demonstrate self-discipline as they interact with one another while playing and socializing. They also lead by example from the way they conduct themselves while interacting with the community they serve. Young people should be encouraged to have good morals because they influence one another in their day today activities. St. Ambrose echoes this idea, for all that we have belongs to God, even our own energies, (On Naboth, 16). In his Pastoral Rule, St. Gregory the Great said that, in giving the needy what is needed, we simply return to them what properly does belong to us. So our dear young dare to open and be ready to share what you have now, it is never too late. As you share, you discover the potential you have. Become an AMA, search to know the will of God in your life.

SISTER NANCY NJARI WAMBUI

Referent sister for Youth and AMA in EA
Original in English

treasures of the archives

Mandaka, 1st foundation in East Africa

“Today we will open the door of the Archives of the East African Province!”

In the Archives of our Provinces are hidden wonderful treasures! Today we will open the door of the Archives of the East African Province!

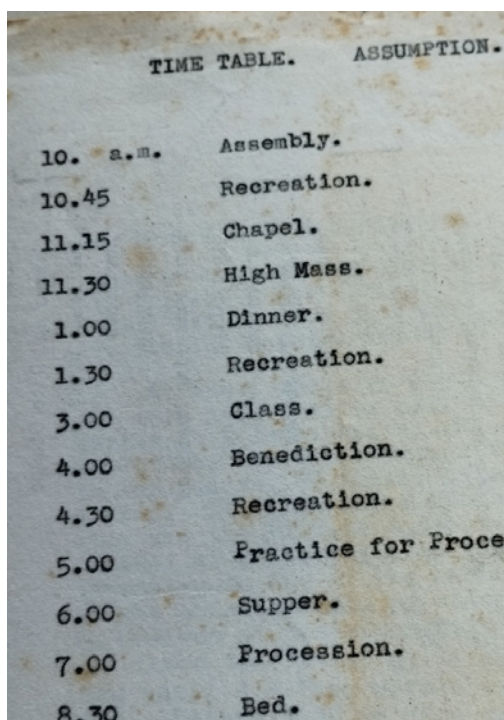
«31st August 1957 – We began our life in this little house and are busy putting everything in order making it as much like a convent as possible. The Blessed Sacrament was in the chapel (one of the rooms) even on our arrival. The five of us are very happy to be here. Mother Mary Veronica, Sr Agnes Mary, Sr Martha Mary, Sr Maria Paula, Sr Maria Rocio” Who are these sisters? The first missionaries in East Africa! And they are writing the first page of the annals of Mandaka Community, in the Diocese of Moshi, in Tanganyika (named Tanzania since October 1964).

The same year, the deliberations of the General Council give us details of the conditions of the foundation: “Our Mother then told us about the new foundation in Moshi (Tanganyika) where we were received to replace the German Sisters in the school that had already been built and which they were running very well. On the immense piece of land belonging to the Mission of the Holy Ghost Fathers, the Bishop (one of them) Mgr Byrne, who is very good, wants to build a convent for us (...) Our Sisters will have to live on the salaries given by the British Government (...) and the pensions given by each child (twice a year, each child pays 140 shillings, and there are 160 children)” (General Council - October 2d, 1957). Mother Veronica had been appointed superior a few weeks earlier, while on mission in Philadelphia. The English Province was responsible for the foundation. (cf. General Council, July 2d, 1957)

Do you want to read the second page of the annals? “Sunday 15th September – Feast of our Lady of Sorrows - We went to the church on our property; it is dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows. There was sung mass at 9.00 am. The church was full to overflowing. They gave us places in the tribune, with the choir. We were very impressed with the fervour of the people who sing with all their heart. Time for communion. Very many went (...) The young school girls, who are children of Mary, dress all in white, native costume (...) After mass, these girls came up to the tribune; one of them spoke to us in Swahili, which was translated as meaning that they were very happy to have us with them, that they hoped we would soon



List of directors since nationalization



1961 schedule



Sister Ana Sara and Sister Peter in front of the Convent in 2024



learn Swahili so as to talk to them and that they would like to give us something but they had nothing at hand. Then they sung some hymns for us, and at the end, very shyly, some of them came and offered us some eggs. We thanked them and went out of the church, where there were many people. We shook hands with some of them and said "Asante", which is all we know of the language. We were so touched that it made us want more than ever to do all we can for them."

In September, less than one month after the arrival of the first Sisters, Mother Marie Denyse visited the new community: September 20th – Our Mother General arrived from Birambo. Mother Veronica and Sr Martha Mary went with the Bishop, Father Brennan and Father John to the airport at Moshi. Notre Mère arrived in white veil. She had a good talk with the Bishop and then we came down to the mission. Notre Mère is delighted with everything here and thinks that we have a good work to do, especially in the way of vocations."

Some circulars help us to imagine the situation of the mission: "Our Mission is built in a compound. It stands on an enormous property which is rather dried up and arid looking at present, but we are told that during the rainy season it will look quite different. We are surrounded by mountains, but not closed in as they are far, and seen from the back of our house is the famous Mount Kilimanjaro, -which only deigns to show itself when the sky is clear, and then it shines forth in all its majestic beauty changing colour and shading continually. So far when he is out we all run to see him; he looks so beautiful." (Mandaka Community Newsletter, September 11th, 1957). On the sides of this beautiful mountain, there are five missions, run by different Congregations.

As some of the Sisters, in Europe, are asking what the missionaries of Mandaka do all the day, Mother Veronica send their schedule (See Letter – November 28th, 1957)

"5.30 Rise – 6.15 Lauds and Prime (in choir) – 6.45 Holy Mass – 7.30 Breakfast and prayers – 8.30 Household chores – 9.30 Study Swahili – 12.35 Little Hours (in choir) – 1.00 Lunch (in silence, with a reading), Washing up... - 2.00 Recreation – 2.30 Obedience and prayers – 3.45 Tea – 4.00 Reading and a nice time together – 4.45 None and vespers (in choir) – 5.00 Lesson in Swahili twice a week – Benediction and confession on Friday – Other days we go for a walk around the garden or plantation to see the people – 6.30 Supper – 10 minutes of reading, then we talk – Washing up... - 7.30 Recreation – 8.00 Obedience – 8.15 Complines (in choir) – Matines low down – Light goes off at 10 p.m."

Each Sister has a responsibility in the community life and, even if the priority is to learn Swahili, they also begin their mission: "Everyday there are groups of children who come for rosaries, media pictures or anything holy we can give them. Some of them bring egg in payment. Rosaries are what they want most and we have had none to give them for some time, as the cases from Philadelphia have not arrived yet. The children are very shy; they stand at some distance from the door and wait patiently until someone pays attention to them. Then the look of longing on their faces when they ask timidly for what they want, makes us wish we had boxes and boxes of things to give them. When we have given them a rosary, they wear it proudly round their necks, and often they are so delighted with their gifts"

In the same circular, we read that the missionaries visit other schools on the mountain in order to know better the uses of the country: "at Achira, in one of the oldest schools in the region, "we saw them serve out their midday meal. Each girl had a aluminum plate full of maize paste, an aluminum bowl of cooked beans, like small haricot beans, and a cup of water."

The buildings are improved little by little. "The Assembly Hall is being roofed and we are going to decide with Brother Dominic on the inside decoration. You know that this hall is to be used as a temporary chapel for the girls until our own chapel is built". And the small house where the Sisters are leaving will be soon replaced by a bigger one where they will be able to live the contemplative life of Assumption. The sisters also discover the various animals of the place! "Lizards, spiders (one as big as the palm of the hand), swarms of ants of different kinds (...)At night through the immense silence that reigns, there are the sounds of hundreds of animals from frogs to baboons, who bark like dogs."

During the holidays, the sisters can contemplate the great capacity of work of their new people: "14 girls who will be ours in January came to stay here and to help us. My Goodness, they do work! We had bought yards of calico (Americani, they call it here) (...) In four days they had made 60 cases and filled them with sisal, a kind of fibre, as it is not the time for maize leaves. As well as this, they dug up a large part of the garden and prepared it for planting. I love to see them working in the garden; the Chagga women are experts at agriculture and are made to work on the soil from almost babyhood, about 3 years old. They work in a line, each girl has a 'jembe', a stick with an iron head. They raise these high above their heads and then jab them into the ground. They pull out weeds and break up the soil with both hands and bare feet."

Most of all, the Sisters are renewed by the positive values of the people they are sent to. We can say that they recognize in the Chagga people a sparkle of Gospel! "The girls of the Chagga Tribe who have been taught by the sisters are noticeable in their unconscious dignity and beautiful deportment, and it struck me very forcibly that they will expect a very high standard of virtue in us; please pray that we do not disappoint them."

January 1958. Beginning of the School Year. "... the children arrived on Monday 13th January and the plan was that for the first week they should not have lessons but would work cleaning the school buildings and working in the garden and fields and organizing themselves in general. They arrived in small groups having walked from different parts of the mountain with all their worldly goods in wooden boxes on their heads. A few who came from towns like Moshi, Arusha or even Mombasa came in small private buses. The first embarrassment was that nobody knew anyone else, not even by name and the second and greatest embarrassment was that nobody could understand what anybody said: the children could not all speak Swahili, many only know Kichagga and our Swahili was very limited... so you can imagine what a nightmare, a miniature tower of Babel..." Challenges of the beginnings! "The School Timetable has been done and redone several times, as we are in the time of experiments..." (Newsletter, February 1958)

If you want to know more about the foundation of Mandaka, contact the Archivist of the East African Province!

SISTER VÉRONIQUE THIÉBAUT

Archivist of the Congregation,
Original French

Jpics 2023 International Session

“To deepen the roots of the JPICS mission in our charism so as to collaborate in the transformation of our society.”

The JPICS International Session was held in Pune, India, at Iñigo Sadam, the Jesuits' postgraduate studies house, from November 27 to December 7, 2023.

There was the participation of 12 Referent Sisters from the different Provinces and Regions of the Congregation, a representation of Sisters from India from the socio-pastoral works and the members of the International Commission.

The session began with a prayer, inspired by Mayan spirituality. Through candles of different colors, which represent the four cardinal points, the reality of the people living in every corner of the world was presented and God's blessing was requested. In this way, it united in prayer the different situations, life and death present in our world, inviting us to enter with our entire being (body, mind, spirit) into harmony and communion with humanity and creation.

Our sister Rekha welcomed us to the session, reminding us of the objective set for these days. She reminded us that our goal is to dedicate ourselves more effectively to the mission of extending the Kingdom of God according to our charism. She invited us to recognize that there are many good things around us. It is an opportune time for change. At the same time, in her message she highlighted some current realities of injustice in the world, presenting to us the following question: In this context, what is our mission as RA, as an International Congregation? How do we understand the mission of transforming society according to the values of the Gospel?

The topic of the session was:

“To deepen the roots of the JPICS mission in our charism so as to collaborate in the transformation of our society.”

The International Team, after a process of consultation, search and planning, considered it necessary to move towards the creation of a common vision of



JPICS in the Assumption. For this, we experienced different stages in the session, that helped us go to the roots, to the essentials, to regain the forces of that vision of transformation of society that Mother Marie Eugenie had so as to continue updating her vision of social transformation. today. The following PROCESS was followed (inspired from the 2006 pre-Chapter document):

- TO SEE: What are the challenges that reality presents to us at the Continental and Congregational level?
- TO DISCERN: What are the calls of the Word of God and the Church today in the context of the JPICS dimension?
- TO ACT: What do we learn from the JPICS experiences of others and at the Assumption?
- TO REFLECT: What are the roots of the JPICS mission in our charism?
- TO REREAD: What have we learned in this time of meeting, sharing?
- TO RESPOND AGAIN: What convictions do we have left to strengthen the JPICS mission as a Congregation Body?

By listening to the different guests, we discovered calls and challenges that move us to take concrete steps in our JPICS commitment:

1. Father Cedric Prakash s.j, invited us to see the structural, endemic and systemic causes of injustice and realities, to go beyond activities and promote transformation processes.
2. Sister Rekha Chennattu, our Superior General, invited us, transformed by the experience of God's grace, to be catalysts for spiritual renewal and social transformation.

3. Monsignor Allwyn D'Silva, auxiliary bishop of Bombay and member of the Executive Committee of the Justice and Peace Commission, CBCI, invited us to become aware that the rules of the game have changed. Times have changed, but we still play by the same rules. In our religious institutions we are preserving something. We are in a mission "mode". We are doing a mission to maintain the infrastructure. We are exhausted. When we are talk about mission. We are talking about the Lord asking us to rebuild the Church.

4. Maureen Villanueva, representative of the Laudato Si Movement, explained the Laudato Si Platform to us. The platform is an initiative of Pope Francis inspired by Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter Laudato Si' on our Common Home. This platform focuses mainly on responding to the cry of the earth, the poor and the children. It is a movement that comes from the base, that we can move the critical mass to this social transformation to respond to these cries.

5. Father José Luis González s.j., of the Jesuit Network with Migrants of Guatemala, reminded us that our apostolic work on the issue of migrants has to ask itself a question: What do we want to achieve by working with migrants? Is it a mere task of meeting your needs? Formation for a world without borders? Universal citizenship would prevent many injustices that are committed against migrants, because what is at stake in migration is universal brotherhood. We are called to educate for universal brotherhood.

6. Mrs. Shobha Supekar, joint secretary of the Historic Agakhan Palace, the National Memorial in memory of Gandhi, shared with us about the deep union of spirituality and political and social commitment that he experienced.

7. Sister Véronique Thiébaud reviewed the history of the Congregation and reminded us that the Marie



JPICS Meeting in India - December 2023



Eugenia Project, which from the beginning was a social project based on the values of the Gospel and education, is a means to achieve social transformation.

8. Sister Sandra Durán helped us to reread the evolution of the Congregation since Vatican II and the different orientations that the various General Chapters have marked with regard to our mission for justice, peace, integrity of creation and solidarity.

Although the time was too short to structure a common vision, the different reflections during the session have allowed us to formulate together convictions and calls that inspire our JPICS commitment and that we are invited to deepen. Below, we share some of these with you:

- The JPICS mission is based on an incarnated spirituality that comes from a personal experience of encounter with God and with our sisters and brothers. Our contemplative life is the source of that spirituality. It is in the encounter with God, who sees the misery and hears the cries of His people (Ex 3:7), that we feel the call to collaborate in the mission of social transformation from the Gospel.
- JPICS implies living a sober and coherent lifestyle, so that having only what is necessary, we live the ecological and supportive dimension of our vows, down to the smallest details.
- So, by listening to the cry of the poor and of the Earth, with our personal and community way of living, in the choices we make every day, in our purchases, the way we dress, work, communicate, etc., we can be a blessing for others and for the environment. This implies living in constant discernment to respond locally to different realities.
- The JPICS mission is the expression of the social

transformation dimension of our charism. It makes us work for justice, through incisive actions in our area of action, from a global vision and a pedagogical process.

- We carry out the JPICS mission from our vocation as educators. Education is the means that Marie Eugenie chose to develop her project of social transformation from the Gospel. For this reason, all our educational processes, wherever we are, lead to a change of mentality and heart and dispose the will to commitment, through an immersion itinerary that leads the person to see, feel and understand reality so as to act in favor of its transformation.

SISTER ALICIA PRIVATE

JPICS-RA International Commission
Original Spanish

spirituality

On the Synodal Path: Transformation, Grace and Fraternity

“The fundamental attitude for these our times is to listen to God in His word and in reality.”

In the context of the Synod on Synodality, proposed by Pope Francis, a profound dialogue emerges that strikes a chord in our Church, both in its expression, as a Community of Baptized Christians, and in the Consecrated Life. Despite the efforts deployed through conferences and meetings, it is crucial that this Synod not only inform us, but also influence, in a transcendental way, our ecclesial identity and, in a singular way, our spirituality as consecrated women.

Transformation and grace are, in my view, the essential pillars on the path of our synodal spirituality. Moving towards conversion and grace, sustained by an attitude of listening, proves to be the path we weave to forge relationships that promote communion. Only from the Spirit can we authentically follow Jesus, navigating between fragility and grace. The urgency to convert and discern reality urges us to tune in to the clamor of God in contemporary challenges, allowing reality to challenge us and touch the depths of our being.

The presence and action of God are manifested in a singular way in the reality we are part of. The Spirit makes newness possible, recreating the Church and fostering Community in the context of the Consecrated Life. Synodal spirituality urges us to really be Sisters in our diversity, rooted in the everyday and in the “inter”, in what is different, as a way of enriching and renewing ourselves.

In this historical moment, the key word is conversion. We should launch out as God would do, simply and humbly, discarding the temptation to feel superior to the other. Synodal spirituality leads us to a genuine encounter, mutual care and the building of a radical fraternity. From this perspective, we must offer to the world what is most genuine in our vocation, remembering that the great protagonist is the Spirit, Who is communion itself and Who summons us to be fraternal. The fundamental attitude for these our times is to listen to God in His word and in reality.

May each step of this Synodal Journey, where transformation, grace and fraternity converge, bring us closer to the very heart of our vocation and inspire us to be authentic witnesses of Synodality in the world around us.

SISTER INGRID POJOY
Central America and Cuba Province
Original Spanish



communication

Together for Effective Digital and...

Together for Effective Digital and Evangelical Communications: a commitment for the coming years

Final Statement of the First International Meeting of Communication for Religious Life

Communication in and of Religious Life is becoming more and more important in order to be present and to help lead the new generations and our congregations into the future that is already underway.

Digital missionaries, we commit to:

Raising awareness about the digital nature of the paradigm of our life, both in society and in the Church: This awareness doesn't just strengthen and focus on our communication on social media, but rather on all dimensions of our life

Considering communication as one of the missions of Religious Life, one that we are encouraged to by the Holy Spirit, who guides us to proclaim the Gospel in the Church.

Having digital missionaries in every institute, with the mission of creating communion and building bridges of dialogue in the digital continent, the sixth in our world

Mission of communication, we commit to:

Professionalizing communication, by investing in financial and human resources. Defining an effective internal and external communication system, at the service of a targeted, integrated and method-based communication strategy

Giving official recognition to the role of the communication officer and to the members of his/her team (sisters and lay people) at various levels (e.g., at the general, provincial, and local level)

At all levels, awakening leaderships to the digital culture and to its potential in the fields of evangelization, vocational, pastoral, and charism promotion

Cultivate collaborative leadership in communion and co-creation with government at various levels (congregation, provinces if any, and local). Enhancing synodal relationships, based on trust and subsidiarity

Encouraging all members of the congregation (both sisters and lay people) to participate and commit themselves to a form of communication that is not just limited to information circulation. Involving members in the active development and exchange

of contents (e.g., news and resources).

An effective external communication is nourished by the effective internal communication of the congregation.

Formation, we commit to:

Boosting professional formation for both the consecrated and lay people, who work in the field of communication in Religious Life

Including digital formation in the programs of initial formation, as part of the curriculum and as an education method: Educating to digital proficiency and educating by means of digital skills. Ensuring lifelong learning for formators, bridging the gap between the analogue and digital paradigms

Educating sisters to embrace a culture of digital communication and to develop critical thinking, whatever their age and role

Learning and developing a discernment-based spirit, which is crucial in this constantly evolving digital world

New frontiers, we commit to:

Admiring the work of God in enhancing both technological progress and our mission. We commit to the responsible and wise use of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT/TIC)

Knowing the potential and ethical limits of Generative Artificial Intelligence: Formation in Artificial Intelligence, formation by means of Artificial Intelligence

Taking advantage of social media and other digital platforms, to start dialoguing with those who are outside of the Church, speaking a language that those who do not share our same values may understand. We are called to go out of our symbolical "convent"

Build spaces for collaboration, exchange of resources and discernment between congregations in the field of communication. We are called to make the Religious Life Charism more visible and known

Building a relationship of trust with the press, both Catholic and non-Catholic.

UISG MANIFESTO (INTERNATIONAL UNION OF SUPERIORS GENERAL)

assumption together

International meeting of Assumption Together

During our international meeting of Assumption Together in January 2023, we reflected on this great mystery that is the Church.

We, both Sisters and lay, were led to rediscover our own experience of the Church and the sharing of our awareness helped us to better deepen the vocation of each and every one in the Church.

Indeed, when we speak of the Church, we speak both of a reality "external" to ourselves and at the same time we speak of ourselves, because we are the Church.

At the last General Chapter (2018), we reaffirmed that:

"We are Assumption Together, lay and Sisters, the charism of the Assumption is lived, expressed and enriched from the diversity and complementarity of our vocations and our contexts, from other "beliefs" or "confessions" according to the different realities in which we are inserted.

We are members of the same family; we drink from the same source... we live and celebrate this being Assumption Together, in varied ways, sharing faith, friendship, mission, prayer..."

From this diversity in communion, I would like to reflect with you on two essential axes: The Church, mystical and historical reality, according to the Second Vatican Council; the ecclesial experience of Marie Eugenie and her love of the Church. This is where we can extend our reflection by sharing our experiences of the Church and our role within it.

The Church, mystical and historical reality according to Vatican II

According to the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* (Light of the Nations), the expression "people of God", used among other denominations to designate the Church, aims to underline the character both mystical and historical subject of the Church, both a gift from God and a human community inserted in history.

The character of "mystery" designates the Church since it comes from God, that it has its origin in God and the character of "historical subject" underlines the fact that the Church acts in history and contributes to direct it. The Church is in history, and it transcends it at the same time.

Just as Christ is man and God, so the Church is human and divine.

Several pitfalls must be avoided: that of only considering the human aspect of the Church, which would lead us to experience an ecclesial affiliation of a sociological type, that of wanting to go to God without going through the Church, or even that of wanting to limit one's spiritual life to a solitary heart to heart with God,

without the hassles of community!

The Church is both holy and called to continually purify itself: how is this possible? It is a subject that challenges, questions, worries and saddens many Catholics and beyond. How can we speak of holiness after the Crusades, the Inquisition, the acts of pedophilia or embezzlement of its members? We must constantly remember that the Church derives its holiness from God and not from its members. This is what the Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 827, recalls: "Christ, 'holy, innocent, and undefiled,' knew nothing of sin, ... the Church, however, clasping sinners to her bosom, at once holy and always in need of purification, follows constantly the path of penance and renewal".

Some, and perhaps we are among them, become detached from it at the sight of the sin which taints it, especially that of its pastors,

Christ, on the contrary, remains inseparably united to His body: there is our strength, there is our faith, there is the madness of Love to which we are invited, and made capable by the Spirit of Christ, to respond with faith.

In these difficult times for the Church, and therefore for all of us, where her faults are revealed to all, where she is like the prostitute spoken of by the prophet Ezekiel in chapter 16, and from whom we divert, from whom we turn away, we must remember that He, Jesus Christ, does not turn away from His body. "He is not ashamed to call us brothers" (Heb 2:11).

The ecclesial experience of Saint Marie Eugénie, foundress of the Religious of the Assumption.

What about Marie Eugénie?

The Church was largely absent at the start of her life. Her mother, however, had a sort of religious sense. Her children had been baptized and Eugenie had made her First Communion, without much preparation it is true. She sometimes brought Eugenie with her to Mass either out of obligation to God, or to the inhabitants of the village to whom people from good families and the rich had to set a good example. But these visits to the Church had not left a conscious impact on Eugenie.

The Church at this time tended to be identified with the aristocracy, political power and landowners. Without much animosity, her family nevertheless seemed to share the prejudices of their class which saw the Church as an enemy of science, freedom and progress. The Church was considered an old-fashioned institution that provided services to the poor.

After her conversion, memories of her First Communion resurfaced. Marie Eugenie later confided to her Sisters that as she approached the altar, she felt fearful and heard an inner voice that reassured her, telling her



“that one day [she] would leave everything to serve this Church. that [she] did not yet know.” She also had the impression that that day, the priests and people including her friends and family who were in the Church “where I never went” were closer to her than any of her other relationships.

Eugenie thought that this First Communion experience was not extraordinary, that every child had the same experience. She returned to her usual life as if nothing had happened. Later, as a young Religious, praying on the memory of her First Communion, she was all the more surprised that at that time, she said, “I almost never prayed and I was already a non-believer”.

Her conversion experience, about ten years later, became a conversion to Jesus Christ, and to the Catholic Church: the Church is Jesus Christ, and the faithful are the mystical Body of Christ.

To love Jesus Christ is to love what Jesus Christ loves: the Church for which He gave Himself up. The Church is the bride of Christ. It is the Sacrament of God in the world, the sacrament of the Kingdom of God. It is in the Church that the Incarnation and the work of salvation continue in human history.

This is how she will formulate the goal that she will give to the Congregation: to love and make people love Jesus Christ and His Church.

It was in the great Tradition of the Church that Marie Eugenie discovered Religious Life, the examples, the teaching and friendship of the saints and the countless schools of spirituality and methods of prayer. Love of the Church in its teachings, its pastors and its members in general, has become the characteristic of the Congregation that she founded as well as all the schools and works that it initiated.

With and in Christ, she gave her life for the Church. The Church was the object of her affection and prayer, her concerns and her attention. She exhorted the Sisters

to have the same faith and the same tender love. On their deathbed, the Sisters of the Assumption were, most often, in the habit of offering their sufferings and their prayers “for the Church”.

Marie Eugenie traces for us a path of demanding and critical love of the Church. Because she understood and loved the Church, she does not hide what she discovers as faults. Because she loves, she dares, she speaks to priests and bishops and tells them of her disappointment... which she makes active!

I end this reflection with the thoughts of Professor Isidore Ndaywel, Congolese historian, member of the Catholic Coordination Committee of the diocese of Kinshasa. He expresses his point of view thus: “The first role of the lay person is to feel responsible for the Church.” He continues: “Parish priests sometimes tend to consider the laity as their auxiliaries, but in many cases, the lay people have presented attitudes that are sometimes more prophetic than their parish priests. As proof, during the march of December 31, 2017, in Kinshasa, in several parishes, it was Christians who obliged the priests to follow the slogan of the Lay Coordination Committee and not the opposite.”

This is what Pope Francis said again to the bishops of Chile on January 16, 2018: “Let us say it clearly, the laity are not our workers, nor our employees. They must not repeat like parrots what we tell them.”

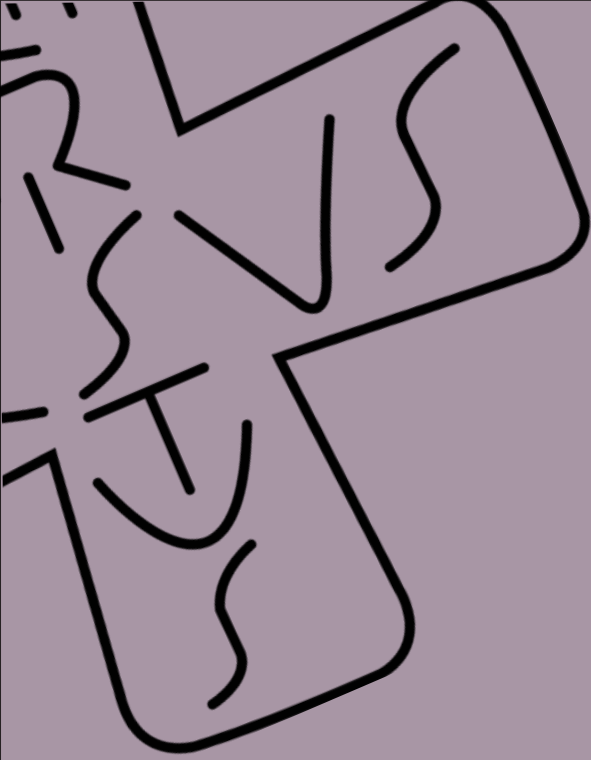
May we, as Assumption-Together, assume more our place in the Church Day by day, “to love her and to make her loved”, according to the wish of Saint Marie Eugenie.

Excerpts from the conference of

SISTER THÉRÈSE AGNÈS

International AT Meeting of January 2023

French original



Direct their flight, but don't clip their wings



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