



October 20, 2023

CONVERSATIONS on the SYNOD . . . THE FIRST TWO WEEKS

Certainly, our PC's and Websites have recently been filled with images, news, and reports from the Synod on Synodality, where close to 500 delegates –bishops, women, men, religious and lay, young and old, from rich and poor parts of the world, are gathered at round tables of twelve. Every day they engage in prayer, silence, listening, sharing and discussing the topics from the Working Paper of the Final Global Document compiled last summer. At the heart of this process is discernment of how the Spirit is moving the Church in our time, and how we are called to “make the path by walking.” As Pope Francis reminds us, “The Holy Spirit is the protagonist.”



Synods are not new, but the this synod will be a The outcome of this synod won't be a document, but an experience the Spirit shared with all the members of Christ's body. It's a new time for our Church, a new “style” of being, doing, and acting. The voices and experience of ALL -- those at the center and those at the margins and beyond, including non-Catholics and non-Christians – are essential to this process and style, including a more collegial mode of governance. The three major themes of this synod: Communion, Participation and Mission. This is the first synod session at which women and lay delegates will be voting members.

For women religious, some of this experience has shaped the decades since the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Our Chapters, assemblies and meetings provided us with new ways of sharing, discernment and decision-making – at round tables! To prepare for the October meetings, the joint leadership of USG/UISG (Union of Men and Women Superiors General) in Rome, held a series of three Conversations on the Synod”. These were facilitated by Maria Cimperman, RSCJ, a member of the synodal initiative group responsible for the synthesis document.

At the first session, after an overview of the Synod Synthesis process, the five USG/UISG delegates reflected on their personal experiences of spiritual conversation, sharing what they have learned about consecrated life in the area of “participation.” Brother Mark Hilton, SC, from our “brother congregation,” spoke movingly of the vocation of a brother. The second session was devoted to “continental perspectives,” with religious representing all the continents offering their personal reflections. The last webinar offered a series of questions to deepen understanding of the synodal process of participation.

Clearly, women religious and our experience of inclusion and marginalization will be part of the table conversations at this synod. And they are more than prepared to speak, to lead, and to act as we enter a new time in our faith communities. Let's support them with prayer in this ancient and ever-new expression of our path together: ***“Pope Francis' call (to synodality) is altogether traditional, but in the breadth it envisages, it is radically new. This should not scandalize but energize us. We are entering upon a great project, and our responsibility for its success is as great as the project itself” (John W. O'Malley, SJ).***

- Sr. Janice Farnham

Links to the three conversations will be provided as soon as they are available. In the meantime, you may want to watch Conversations on the Synod (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CUW0wohvas>)

INTERNATIONAL JUNIORATE BEGINS - Valencia, Spain

Sr. Middia Doute writes from Valencia, Spain, where this year's program for the International Juniorate is getting underway.



The Juniorate Community – pictured left to right: Meerab of Pakistan, Marta of Nigeria, Marie Puy (Director), Mercy of Nigeria, Barbara of Cameroun, Sofia of Pakistan, Middia of Haiti and Juwell of India.

Some of us arrived on October 9th, and after a few days, two more arrived. We still need Carmen from Mexico to make our group complete, and we look forward to her coming with great affection.

We're most grateful to God and to all those praying for us for this experience. We count on those prayers so that this may be a year of blessings, a time when we can experience and deepen within in our call and our commitment, becoming more fully women sowing hope for those who need it."



On the left, the juniors are visiting an area school (Jesus Maria Fuen-santa) and below, a neighborhood (Barrio de la Coma).

- Sr. Middia Doute

UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION

Sr. Middia Doute has a new address:
Religiosas de Jesús-María
Gran Vía Fernando El Católico, #37
46008 Valencia, Spain



HELLO FROM GRANADA, SPAIN !

Hello from Granada, Spain! I want to first thank all of you who were able to join me for the celebration of my vows. It was a very special day made even more special by so many who were able to join virtually. I have since moved to the southern city of Granada, beginning my first ministry by living in a college dormitory.

Dormitories are different here in Spain, in that, they are not on university campuses, but instead run by private entities. Students look for different places to stay that fit their needs, specifically distance to their campus and services offered by the dormitory. The two types of dorms are, residences (students eat, sleep, and study) and “colegio mayor”. We run a colegio mayor, which means, students, by choosing to live here, will be implicated in the activities we offer and will receive up to 12 credits in the 5 years of their university education for said implication. The activities are abundant from volunteer opportunities, hiking, ecology groups, sports, faith exploring, debate, reading clubs, theater, musicals, psychology/self-improvement groups, to different parties and annual events. There truly is something for everything and creates a great family environment.

In the dormitory, we have 165 students and are a community of 8 religious: Spanish Srs. María Rodríguez (standing left), Almudena Soler, Fe García, María Carmen Pérez, Junkal Guevara, Inmaculada Guerra; Brittany Galvin of USA-Haiti (seated left) and Angela Shuul of the African Delegation. We each live on one of the 6 floors of the building and have our own private dining room, living room, work rooms, and chapel. Our ministries include: dormitory director, university professor, university studies, special education teacher, and being a presence in the dorm in retirement.



So, what exactly do I do? Well, in the dormitory I will be involved in several of the activities including going with some of the students to a women’s home and accompanying the women there, participating in the faith group, being a presence as the students prepare for the first of the twice-yearly musicals, and playing soccer and handball. Some weekends I will be able to participate in the hiking group and ecology/garden group. Two mornings a week I work the front door taking care of questions, answering phone calls, receiving packages, etc. It is also where the students must check themselves in and out as they leave the dorm. I find it a great way to be a presence to the students.

Additionally, two days a week I will be going to our preschool through secondary school that is right next door to help with English classes in the secondary part of the school. I will be working with small groups of students each class hour working on small projects in English. And finally, one day a week I will be going to a town about a half an hour a way where we have a preschool in a more impoverished area where I will lend a hand with whatever needs be done. It is the same school and community where last spring I spent a month during my apostolic experience.

It is quite the experience getting used to the co-ed life of finishing activities at 11:30pm and then waking up to go to school the next morning!

- Sr. Brittany Galvin

BACK TO SCHOOL PHOTOS - Washington School for Girls

We at WSG were thrilled to see new and returning students. As is WSG tradition, teachers, staff, and volunteers were on hand to cheer as our girls walked through the front door for the first day.



Check out <https://rjmusa.org/education/> for updated information on the sisters global commitment to education .

REGINAL HIGH SCHOOL 1963 50TH REUNION

Below is the 50th Class Reunion of the Regina High School Class of 1963, this past weekend. You will see Cheryl Nichols and Sr. Margaret Perron and the graduates also send their love an appreciation to Sr. Janice Farnham, their Principal for all four years.



Additional reunion pictures, including the one above, taken by photographer G. Eddie Patten, Sr. can be viewed at: [Regina High School 5-OH](#) (password is "Regina").

PEANUT BUTTER DELIVERY - Jean Rabel, Haiti

The arrival of the cargo of boxes of peanut butter to Jean Rabel was cause for great rejoicing. What should have been a days journey turned out to be four! Road conditions took their toll on the old truck, which broke down!

All 500 boxes were counted as they were unloaded from the truck. Loading and unloading is manually done....no hydraulic lifts.....so all hands on deck! Then came transferring and storing, which meant more lifting, carrying. It's hot work, requiring many vital water breaks!



Part of this cargo is used in the mobile clinic's nourishment program for 0-5 year olds who are severely malnourished. Despite this added nutrition, some sadly die, but the mortality rate would be far worse without it.

Our deepest gratitude for your help in relieving the hunger of these children!

- Sr. Rose Kelly

This week, distribution has occurred to the schools.

The pupils were arriving hungry, so a booster with the individual peanut butter sachet, is already evident in the punctual attendance and increased attentiveness in class. This keeps them going until they get their school meal of rice and beans!

Very often this is the only meal they receive as their families struggle to eke out a living each day.



UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION

Srs. Liz Cornejo and **Rosario Fumanal** also have a new address:

Kay Jezi Mari in Gros Morne, Haiti

SETTLING IN AT ELLISON

All four community members have now arrived at the Yonkers house, and report they are "85% settled."

Here they cleaning and organizing in the basement: Srs. Pat Brito, Christine Carrigg, Pat Ryerse, and Kathleen Scanlon.

They have already begun functioning as a 'NY Welcome Center,'

having hosted Srs. Mary Bourdon and Eileen Reid last week, and are presently giving hospitality to Srs. Norene Costa and Mairin McDonagh, who is visiting from Ireland.



UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION

Srs. Pat Brito, Christine Carrigg, Pat Ryerse and Kathleen Scanlon have a new address:
Ellison Avenue Community
75 Ellison Avenue
Bronxville, NY 10708

LA CASA DE ESPERANZA

It's beautiful 70-degree weather here, which I'm very much enjoying after my move to San Diego, even though I will miss the beautiful colors in New England this Fall.



Here we all are: Srs. Natalia Mejia (left), Sandra Salazar (standing), Rosa Mejia (Province of Mexico), and Rosie Nicholson.

- Sr. Sandra Salazar

UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION

Sr. Sandra Salazar has a new address:
La Casa de Esperanza
1318 Pequena Street
San Diego, CA 92154

CHILD SAFEGUARDING SEMINAR - JEAN RABEL, HAITI

Recently a seminar on Child Safeguarding was held in Jean Rabel. It was organized by Michel Joseph Mertil and 25 participants attended the seminar including staff and volunteers who are in contact with children who came from our schools and local centers.

Acknowledging the vulnerability of children worldwide, but more so in our own isolated department, Michel outlined the principles required to ensure a healthy and wholesome childhood for all who come into our care.



There was a lively discussion as people shared experiences. Shirley Petit-Homme, the designated Protection Officer, talked about the reality of northwest Haiti, the lack of resources, and the need for collaboration among all staff and volunteers. Sr. Curin García Calvo, recalled Claudine, our Foundress, as a person who instilled love in her followers for the children, especially those most abandoned. Then, a snack of peanut butter sandwiches, bananas and natural fruit juice was enjoyed by all!

- Sr. Rose Kelly

WAKE SERVICE FOR SR. LORRAINE GENEST, RJM

Sr. Lorraine's funeral on October 18 was preceded by a Wake Service, during which Sr. Vivian Patenaude offered the reflections given below.

On the morning of her death, when I asked Sr. Lorraine how she felt, she responded, "Hopeful!"

I said, "hopeful that that you would get better or hopeful that God is coming for you?" With a gesture of her hand and in a very soft voice, she whispered, "The last one!" I said: "Hopeful that God is coming for you?" A weak nod of her head and a very slight smile proved that she was waiting – just waiting for God to come.

Who was this Sister Lorraine? Lorraine was a Franco-American Religious of Jesus and Mary whose father was born in Quebec, Canada and whose mother was born in Worcester, MA. She was an amazing educator, an avid reader, a linguist who could speak three languages fluently – French, English and Spanish – a woman who loved her family, especially her nieces and Tony, her godchild, and was always animated by the presence of animals, especially dogs. She was also a woman who loved to tell stories of her ministry experiences.

Following these reflections, different sisters brought to the table various symbols of Lorraine's life, and those present were invited to offer their own personal remembrances.

Shortly after, the Liturgy took place, concluding with words of the Recessional Hymn:

The hand of God shall hold you, the peace of God enfold you.....

Rest in peace, Lorraine!




To my JM Family,

*Heartfelt thanks for the many ways you have found
to be present to me during my brother Bob's illness,
final days and death.*

*Bob always looked upon my JM Family
as an extension of his own,
and often called upon the help
of his 'brother-in-law' (Jesus),
when praying for any one of you.*

*Thank you for being there for the Patenaude Family
by your cards, letters, phone calls
and for the special gift of your presence.*

*May you be blessed,
Vivian*



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THOSE WITH NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS



November 13	Dina Maria Garcia, RJM
November 14	Jacqueline Picard, RJM
November 15	Mariam Norick, RJM
November 16	Loretta Knapp, RJM
November 26	Mary Bourdon, RJM

PROVINCE OFFICE

October 23 Mary and Rosemary in Highland Mills for TMS Board Meeting

November 3 Next Bridges published (articles due by Wednesday 11/1 at noon)

PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED FOR...

- Successful heart surgery for Eugene, a Haitian dentist, who is having surgery in the US;
- Continuing Prayers: Colleen Pusateri, the daughter of Haiti Mission supporter Lorrie Kenney; Jennifer Morse-Meisenkothen, niece of Sr. Teresita Morse; for peace and love to reign in all countries and regions of the world; the safety and security of the people of Haiti, and for God's blessings on all the efforts being made to bring peace and justice to this island nation;
- Ellison Avenue Community (Srs. Pat Brito, Christine Carrigg, Kathleen Scanlon and Pat Ryerse) as week's community for special prayer.



**WE ALSO PRAY FOR ALL THE NEEDS
OF OUR RJM SISTERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS.**

Praised Forever Be Jesus and Mary