



Provincialate : 4A Chestnut Drive, Singapore 679330.

Tel: 67621910

website: www.chij-sisters.org

The IJ General Chapter and the Council of the Institute

The General Chapter Event takes place every six years. It provides a special opportunity for the Institute to review its life and to renew the dynamism of its charism within the church. It draws up definite objectives so that the Institute may better accomplish its mission in the present day world.

It consists of:

- a year of preparation
- the Collegial Assembly which is a meeting of elected delegates representing the Institute in its unity and diversity. It elects the international leadership team

In the follow-up period, the sisters throughout the Institute search for new ways of implementing the orientations of the Collegial Assembly suited to their culture and local conditions.

This year, the General Chapter is held in Rome. We have delegates from Bolivia, Cameroon, Czech Republic, England/Ireland, France, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Myanmar, Peru, Singapore, Spain and Thailand.



General Chapter (15 June to 6 July 2019, Rome) Theme: Listen! I am sending you on a new path

Sr Marina Motta on behalf of the Italian Province welcomes the Delegates



Young musicians who performed for the delegates

Infant Jesus Sisters, Singapore (founded in France, 1662, established in Singapore 1854)



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Sr Kikuko carrying the Chapter Candle to the Opening Mass



Sr Honorine carrying the candle to the Chapter Room after Mass



Each delegate signed her commitment to the work of the Chapter on the Logo poster

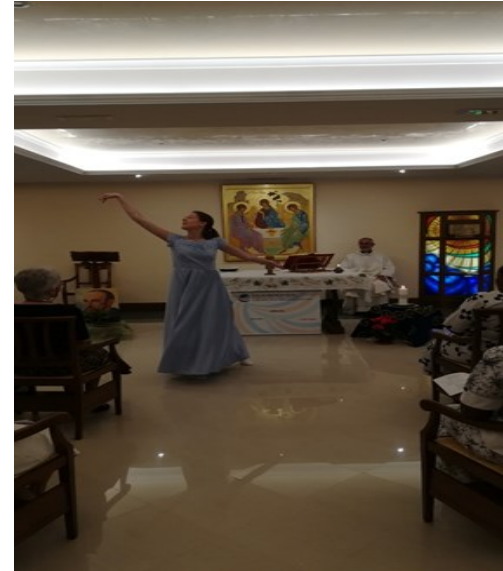




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Sr Klara expressed in liturgical dance the IJ Srs' Commitment

Sr Marie Pitcher, the Superior General, gave the opening address after the Opening Mass and Commitment Ceremony



GENERAL CHAPTER 2019

Opening Address

16 June 2019

A very warm welcome to you all to this beautiful city of Rome, the eternal city, Italy's global and cosmopolitan capital encompassing nearly 3,000 years of art, architecture and culture.

The General Chapter 2019 has begun with our Opening Mass and the commitment of each one of the participants. It takes place every six years and is a very significant event in the life of the Institute.

We are gathered here as an international and intercultural group, coming from four continents and representing many different backgrounds and experiences, but with a shared charism and history. This is a truly remarkable gathering, supported by the prayer of the whole Institute and our many friends and colleagues. Each one here has a unique and vital contribution to make. So, let us celebrate who we are and enter into the work of the General Chapter by being creatively present, lovingly engaged and courageously active.



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The Book of the Institute (no. 96) makes it very clear that the main purpose of a General Chapter is to be an instrument of renewal for the Institute and an opportunity to reflect on and articulate the charism in fresh and compelling ways:

“The General Chapter is a collegial assembly which represents the Institute in its unity and diversity. It provides a special opportunity for conversion when, under the action of the Holy Spirit, the whole Institute reviews its life and renews the dynamism of its charism within the Church, while at the same time seeking to preserve its spiritual heritage. It draws up definite objectives so that the Institute may better accomplish its mission in the present day world.”

The Chapter is a ‘faith-event’, which means that faith permeates all that happens from the first day of preparation to the end of the Chapter. This faith is exercised through discernment. The discernment process requires a spirit of inner freedom in each one of us and a high level of trust in one another. Each person is invited to be attentive to what is happening within herself and to trust that God will speak to her through others also.

This time in the life of the Institute is God’s time for us. It is the space where all that has gone before us reaches its peak, and all that is in front of us begins to reveal its possibilities. Through our faith we also know that it is the time to recognise God’s incarnate Word with us, the Spirit breathing in and through us.

Pope Francis gave a talk recently where he said that the future has a name, and the name of the future is Hope! We are called to hope in the vision of God for the future. We are religious women called to communion, consecrated women called to the discipleship of Jesus, to be sacraments of the presence of God in our world. We hope with the prophet Jeremiah, *“Yes, I know the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for peace not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope”* (Jer.29:11). This vision of hope for the challenges and suffering of the present to become a future filled with life requires that we enter deeply into the mystery of our consecrated lives. We will journey to the promise of hope by remaining steadfast in our faith and in our identity as women religious and as Infant Jesus sisters.

Our vision of hope is embedded deep in the heart of our charism. We are a people with a vision, a vision of the love and compassion of God for all creation. As Infant Jesus sisters in our provinces, vice-provinces and districts, whether we are young or old, many or few, we are witnesses to compassion. Our prophetic vision is in our hearts, hands, and feet. The places we walk, the people we encounter and the way we accompany them, and how we pray, tell the story of compassion as we follow Jesus.

The choice of theme for the Chapter, *‘Listen! I am sending you on a new path’* is the result of a process of reflection, sharing and collaboration that involved the whole Institute. It was finalised at the Council of the Institute last year in Kuala Lumpur. It is the fruit of an attentive look at today’s world with its needs and calls. What is important is the call of God to *Listen!* to the voice of the



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Spirit at all times - before, during and after every decision and every action we take. This is what discernment is all about. There are many choices to be made in our lives and we need discerning hearts.

We have inherited a great tradition from Nicolas Barré, Mother Mathilde, our first sisters, our first missionaries, and all of those Infant Jesus sisters who have gone before us, many of whom we have known personally, whom we have loved and who have inspired us. We can all remember those sisters who have been an influence either on our vocation as IJs or at special moments in our lives. We thank God for them all. Let us hold them in our hearts and know that they are with us as we journey and search for the *new path* on which God wants to send us at this time in our history.

The quest for the future must begin by remembering. To understand the future we need to take time to remember. We need to enter into the mystery of our memory, even though it is sometimes selective, sometimes painful, and sometimes hidden. We need to tell and retell the stories that made us: our pioneer stories, our founding stories, our stories of renewal and conflict; we will find the seeds of our hope there.

We tell stories to know who we are! Can we be brave enough to retell our stories of compassion and courage? When we trust in our own stories, in our voices as women, when we stand in our faith with the gift of hope, we will join all those quiet women and men who are gently, simply, lovingly restoring creation, restoring peace and restoring human dignity.

We need the gift of compassion found in the stories that have inspired our courage as consecrated women over the centuries. These stories began long ago with Jesus and the women he encountered. Women who teach us to treat women like Jesus did, respectfully and lovingly. Women who teach us to take counsel, like Jesus did from Mary, his mother, who advised him at the wedding in Cana. Women who teach us to find wisdom in women, like the Samaritan woman at the well, and to accept the challenges of the Syrophenician woman, just as Jesus did. Women who call us to notice suffering like Jesus did when the woman with the haemorrhage touched him. As women of hope and compassion, let us embrace the call to love, trust, and challenge the women and men who journey with us.

As we live this time together at the General Chapter, the times of prayer, the silence and the discernment process will call us to an inner exploration of what the Spirit is awakening in us. Let us look to the past with gratitude and let us live the present moment with passion so that we can move forward with hope.

May we have a very fruitful General Chapter and may it bring abundant life to each one of us and to all our sisters and lay friends who are with us on this new and exciting journey.

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Sr Micheline Trembray CSC, our facilitator, introducing Srs Rita and Marguerita FCJ Srs, who are leading the delegates in a 2-day discernment workshop.



Chapter delegates taking part in the Discernment Workshop.



Communication 1

from the 2019 General Chapter - 20 June 2019

Greetings from Rome where we are now almost acclimatized to the hot sun, days without rain and the air con! It is a huge privilege to spend time with such a diverse group of people. We are multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-aged and international! But, we are something like the people at the first Pentecost because we can understand one another- most of the time! This is because we

have a shared history, a shared chrism, many interpreters and great technology!



On the first evening of June 15th, we were officially welcomed by Sr. Marie; later we enjoyed a lovely concert of classical music performed by a very talented young people's group; this was followed by a most interesting talk on the beginnings of Christianity in Rome. This wonderful welcome was organised by Sr. Marina and Sisters from the Italian province; in fact they continue to look after us so that we want for nothing!

On Sunday, feast of the Holy Trinity, we began with Mass during which Klara (Czech Republic) performed a very moving and prayer-filled dance, symbolising the total giving of ourselves to God and to the Chapter process. After Mass, we were led to the Chapter Room, following the Chapter candle and singing: 'Lead me, guide me on your way.' We gathered there and each one was called forth to sign a beautiful poster containing the Chapter logo; this was to demonstrate our commitment as delegates. It was a very moving and solemn opening liturgy.

In her address, Sr. Marie reminded us that this Chapter is a faith event and she urged us all to be 'creatively present, lovingly engaged and courageously active' during the process. Marie made a few references to our bearing witness to the gift of compassion and the importance of remembering our stories which tell of how we live that compassion; we follow in the footsteps of Nicolas Barré and many Sisters and other companions down through the years who have shown us how to make the witness to compassion a reality in our lives.



We had two days on discernment; this was to help us understand how to live out our faith by seeking God in all things and preparing us for the work of the chapter. Much prayer and discernment has already gone on in our Provinces and we as delegates know that we have to listen to the call of God and search for the new path which he is calling us to find in our journey as an Institute. Our facilitators reminded us that God has an image and a hope of what we

are becoming and that we should not let God dream alone.



L-R: Micheline Tremblay csc, our Facilitator, with the General Council – Noreen, Marie, Kimiko and Maria.

We had a very comprehensive report from the General council covering the main aspects of their work in the Institute during the last six years, following the Chapter in Locquirec, France, when we were invited to 'choose life and to be like clay in the potter's hands.' It was amazing to hear the detail of how this mandate has been fulfilled; clearly it would not have happened without the tremendous work done by the General Council. It has given us much hope and enthusiasm to trust that the Spirit will continue to lead us if we remain faithful to his promptings. We also had the opportunity to look at some critical statistics of the number of Sisters, age distribution, etc, since 2013. Some of us saw fragility and diminishing numbers while others rejoiced in our many gifts and in the signs of new life. It is indeed a time to have faith and to trust the plans that God has in mind for us. We have had reports from our Provinces in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe describing what headlines are being made in our countries, how we have responded to the Chapter mandate (2013) and our hopes and dreams for the future.

We all felt very encouraged to hear stories of hope, of vitality, of new shoots in ministry; of growth in our collaboration with the laity, and of our deepening awareness to care for planet earth. We will continue to hold in our hearts the many situations of violence, of conflict, of displacement of peoples which were also described. It is humbling to know that our communities are ready to respond to God's call no matter how daunting the challenges and how few the labourers!

Thank you for your loving support, particularly for your prayer that we will remain open to the Holy Spirit and see, understand and courageously set out on the path we are being called to travel.

EACH PROVINCE, VICE-
PROVINCE AND DISTRICT
PREPARES THE DAILY LITURGY
OR PRAYER



THE COUNCIL OF THE INSTITUTE

A Council of the Institute is held approximately every two years - in the years when there is no General Chapter.

The main aim is to listen deeply to where the Spirit is calling the Institute at this time and to come to a consensus on a theme for the next General Chapter which will help all IJ sisters to move forward together.

This meeting was held in Malaysia in Feb 2018. [... read more](#)



Archbishop Julian Leow with Sr Marie (Team Leader) and IJ Sisters at the Council of the Institute in Kuala Lumpur 2018

Opening Address by Sr Marie [... read more](#)

Closing Address by Sr Marie [...read more](#)

