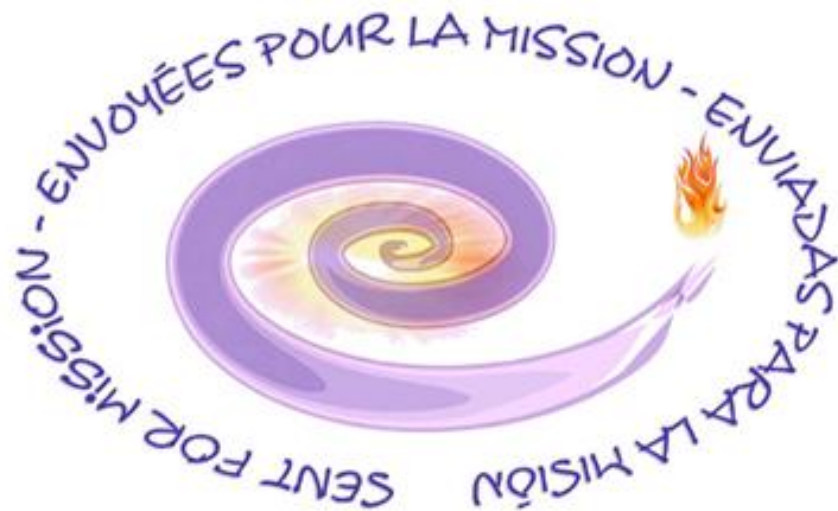


19th GENERAL CHAPTER

2014

INFORMATION ON THE CONTEXT

ASIA



If we don't dare now, then when?
Si nous n'osons pas maintenant, alors quand?
Si no nos atrevemos ahora, entonces ¿cuándo?

Dear Sisters,

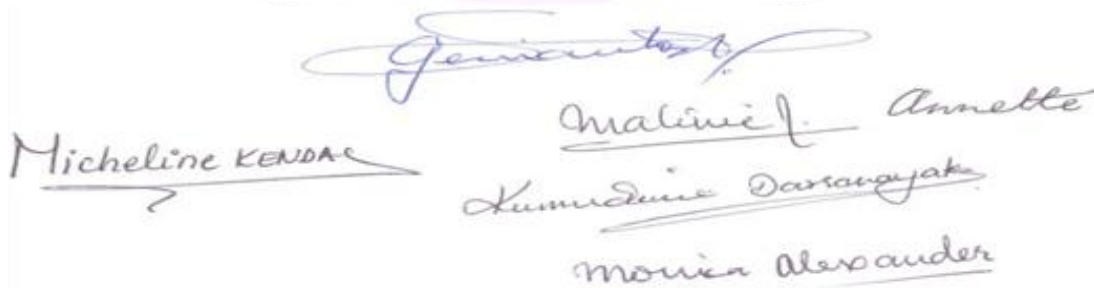
As you know, each Unit has been asked to present its situation briefly in preparation for the General Chapter.

In the publications which you will be receiving, you will find descriptions of the various situations in the places where we are present throughout the world. These documents show in a few freely-chosen words how the *Holy Family* sees itself, the situation of each country and, consequently, the situation of the Institute.

We have decided to publish these documents continent by continent so you will receive four publications. You will be able to find these on our website also in the area reserved for the Institute (1). This is the third document.

The aim of all this is to help us to get to know better the places where we are living, to enable everyone to access the information and to ensure that each Chapter Delegate has the material at hand. Thank you for sending in your reports.

Reading these documents, will enable us to be in contact with one another aware of being part of the Family united by the same Charism for the Mission of Christ in today's world.



Handwritten signatures of the Pre-Chapter Commission members:

- Micheline KENDAC
- Malini J. Annette
- Kumudini Darsangajak
- Monica Alexander

The Pre-Chapter Commission

Website: www.saintefamillebordeaux.org

N.B: Will the Chapter Delegates please bring these documents with them.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FROM THE UNITS

INDIA

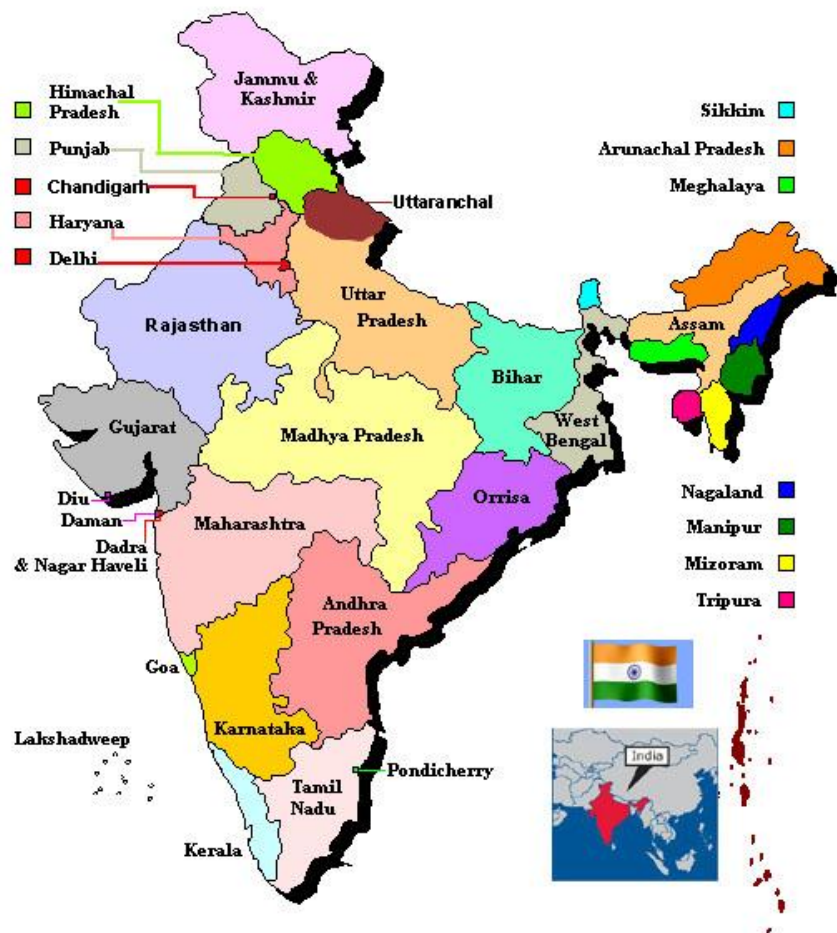
POLITICAL, CULTURAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ECCLESIAL SITUATION

The history of India begins as a 75,000 year old ancient civilization and this can be classified in different phases namely "ancient, classical, mediaeval and modern" periods.

The Government of India is known as the Union Government and the governing authority is divided into 28 states and seven union territories.

The official language of the Government is Hindi

while English is the second language. There are about 18 official languages and more than 2,000 dialects are spoken in various parts of the country. Indian culture is rich and diverse and this has persisted through the ages precisely of its nature of antiquity, unity, continuity and universality.



The population of India is 1.27 billion and it stands second in the world population. The gender ratio in the country is 940 female per 1,000 male. India is the world's 4th largest economy and well-developed in information Technology, bio-technology and 2nd largest pool of scientists and engineers in the world.

The agricultural sector contributes 21% of India's GDP. The rural areas are still home to 72 % of the people in India. Most of the rural poor depend on rain-fed agriculture and fragile forests for their livelihoods. The total cultivable land area is decreasing due to constant pressure from an ever-growing population and increased urbanization. The World Bank further estimates that 33% of the global poor now reside in India.

India is the **birthplace of four of the world's major religions**; namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Christianity reached India in AD 52 when Thomas the Apostle preached in Eastern and Western coasts of India. Christianity is India's third-largest religion, with 2.4 %. There are over 19.9 million Catholics and there are 166 dioceses. The Christian Church runs thousands of educational institutions and hospitals contributing significantly to the educational, health and social development of the nation.

The literacy rate in the country is 74%. Economic and social disparities also plague the fundamentals of the education system. Rural children are less able to receive education, since rural children have to work to contribute to the family's income. India is sadly home to 12.59 million of child labourers in the world.

Current environmental issues in India are deforestation, soil erosion, over-grazing, desertification, air pollution from industrial effluents, vehicle emissions, water pollution from raw sewage, run-of agricultural pesticides and non-potable tap water etc.

The average inflation rate in the last financial year is 7.5% which caused the price rise of primary articles. On August 27th 2013 the Indian rupee hit a record low in its biggest fall in 18 years. Higher oil prices and the declining rupee are characterize the situation in India. Corruption is widespread and it is ranked 95 out of 179 countries in the world.

Sanitation: Lack of proper sanitation is a major concern for India. It is estimated that one in every ten deaths in India is linked to poor sanitation and hygiene. About 18% of India's population is undernourished.

The constitution of India solemnly resolves to secure for all its citizens justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual the unity and integrity of the nation. But in recent decades, caste, communal tensions and religion-based politics have become more prominent.

PAKISTAN

Political situation:

Pakistan came into being on the basis of Islam in 1947. With a population over 183 million, it is the sixth most populous country with an area covering 796,095 km. Pakistan's history has been characterized by periods of military rule, political instability and conflicts with neighbouring India. It continues to face challenging problems, including overpopulation, terrorism, poverty, illiteracy and corruption.

The main two parties, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Muslim League N (Nawaz) - (MLN); successively take the reins of the country now and then. At present Mr. Nawaz Sharif, Prime minister is the leader of MLN. The killing of Hakimullah Mehsud, one of Pakistan's most wanted Islamic militants in a U.S. drone strike has exposed centuries-old rivalries within the group he led, the Pakistani Taliban, making the insurgency ever more unpredictable and probably more violent. There is a constant outbreak of terrorism growing daily in different parts of the country and it is a great threat for peace. The Government is trying to negotiate with the concerned parties and to come to a peaceful agreement but the demands of the Taliban are such that the Government is not in a position to fulfil them. The minorities are often targeted because Christians are looked upon mostly as enemies of Islam. The latest news is that

as long as America continues with their drone attacks the terrorists are determined to continue their attacks on minorities.

Cultural:

Pakistan is rich in culture having 97% Muslims and 3% Christians, Hindus and others. The four provinces have four different cultures which are very much safe guarded. Urdu is the official language but English in general is used in Government, military, business and educational Institutions while other languages are spoken in different valleys and areas. The bradari (brotherhood of elders) system is highly valued and the extended family has an important role to play in daily life.



Social:

The social situation is slowly changing with education. The values of hospitality and respect are practised widely. Male domination continues; Women are discriminated against and restricted in their social movements and in some parts

education is not their right. The Patriarchal system is still prevalent and closely knit family plays an important part. Violence against women is very much wide-spread yet we see a gradual change in the social life of Pakistan due to education, migration and Western influence. A number of women are holding positions and are in the high posts of parliament and judiciary section. However, honour-killing still continues.

Economic Situation:

Pakistan has a semi-industrialized economy, mainly textiles, chemicals, food processing, agriculture and other industries. With a growing population it struggles below the poverty line. Today the country faces economic crisis, hence the soaring inflation of 7.5%. Poverty is wide-spread and so the increase of child labour. The long hours of load-shedding (gas & electricity) has an adverse effect on the daily life and economy of the country. The poor experience deeper poverty and even misery. Terrorism and corruption have their hold on the masses. Unemployment, at 5.7%, is on the rise. This brings in

many social evils such as murder, kidnapping, selling of organs, trafficking of children and women and robbery. For good and sound education people have to pay a big price.

Ecclesial:

The young Church in Pakistan is growing strong in spite of countless setbacks. The text-books in the education favours Islam as every child has to study to get good grades. The church is struggling to have Christianity as a subject. Great effort is needed to strengthen the faith of people. Still vocations are on the rise but motivation and commitment are needed.

Often Christians are targeted and the Church is helpless in safeguarding the people. The blasphemy law has an impact mostly on our Christians. A little dispute is enough to set the whole colony into ablaze like Shanthi Nagar, Sangla hill, Korian, Gojra, Joseph Colony in Lahore and the latest the Church in Peshawar. Security is provided by the state to Churches, mission schools and the foreign missionaries. Our Faith and trust in the Lord takes us forward.

SRI LANKA

**CONTEMPLATIVE
RELIGIOUS - NAGODA**

Political- social- Economy. What are the calls and challenges?

Our society is much affected by the above realities. Great anxiety is caused among us and in our people. As Mary did, we ponder them in our heart and plead for



conversion. Like Esther, we plead for mercy. Like the poor widow, we offer to God all that we are and all that we have hoping for salvation. We pray for true wisdom on our leaders. Like Moses and Joshua we call on God with humility for mercy and forgiveness.

❖ We unite ourselves consciously with all those suffering life situations. The Word of God- the Psalms support us to intensify our prayer for them and with them in both joy and sorrow. Continuous prayer tempered by self discipline and joyful penance is offered on behalf of the oppressed.

❖ Information on the current situation makes us more empathetic. We surrender all to God hoping that God will remedy the situation. In order to create greater consciousness of our mission of intercession we would depict these urgent needs regularly on our notice board.

❖ While living the attitude of thanksgiving for all God's blessings on us, we desire to accept all privations with faith and trust. We try to cultivate a positive attitude instead of passing judgement on apparently corrupt situations, and evil doers such as prostitutes, criminals.... Jesus challenges us to be sympathetic and recognize the sacredness of each person. Let us handle everything with care and respect. All is God's gift. Let us be grateful and be conscious that what we save today will be advantageous for the future.

❖ We too recognize the war within us as spoken by St. Teresa of Avila. Past wounds tend to disturb us. But the New Vision makes us respond positively, radiating hope filled vibrations to the world around us. Our faith in the presence

of God assures us of God's power active in the cosmic creation.

❖ Considering realities such as lack of freedom of expression we are challenged. Each one can ask herself, "How do I use my freedom and understand others?" God gives us freedom to do what is right and not what we like. Lack of human respect, injustices, thirst for power prompt us to change our attitudes towards those who serve us in our everyday life. By words of encouragement, we uplift the oppressed women, supporting them according to our life style to live their feminine qualities. The root of all evil is the lack of love and failure to cultivate healthy relationships. Considering seriously the aspect of forgiveness we want to live the quality **"LOVE"** which Jesus preached: **"LOVE YOUR ENEMIES"**.

❖ However, it is encouraging to note that with our past experiences of natural disasters such as Tsunami, floods, Typhoons... etc. our people have been brought together. The aspect of humanness has been lived in reality-providing for the needs of the victims, giving every possible relief, expressing the family dimension-interconnectedness, interrelatedness and interdependence. Here according to our vocation we have been in solidarity with our suffering people. As we have experienced the providence of God we try to be providence to others. For instance, we have been awakened to the fact of the high cost of living, unjust distribution of wealth, etc. when poor people come to our doorstep, bemoaning their distressing situations and requesting help. All the distressing situations of our people are brought into our prayer.

COLOMBO

The Present Reality of Sri Lanka

The people of Sri Lanka heaved a sigh of relief at the end of the civil war in 2009.

The people's collective hope was to participate in a nation building process that gives a stable and just framework for sustainable reconciliation and peace.

Today the people's collective disappointment is that:

- The country is moving towards a pre-democratic society with blatant abrogation of democratic values paralyzing its institutions consequently with no rule of law; Nepotism vested with authoritarian power.
- Systematic militarization all over the country severely visible in the war-affected areas where the military is the main actor in governance. Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission emphasized the urgency of justice, authentic reconciliation and peace. But with Constitutional reforms and with military mediation the centralization of power and unwillingness to share power continue, leading towards ethno-nationalist polarization.
- Post-war development strategy quasi-military process in which people's participation is disassociated and any dissent is quashed cruelly.
- Neo-liberal economic policies prioritize:
 - Private business and profit over empowerment of the poor;
 - Education as a private business, a commodity over social mobility of the ordinary people.
 - Mega development with Land-grabbing over the right of people to land, employment and quality living.



- The crisis in the Church is primarily of faith;
- Scrupulously committed to human-made rules and not so to the divine rules; Faith seems to be disconnected with social and political realities;
- Imparts an Inspiring theological knowledge but with little or no praxis.
- The faithful in general express their faith in personal and community living but not so in the social and political dimensions. Increasing stress on devotions, rituals....
- Reconciliation, justice and peace work not considered a priority.

Our interaction in the above context.

Our engagement (only about 8% - 10% of the sisters, some see the reality but lack conviction, majority are lethargic and fatalistic).

At grass roots: Solidarity with the vulnerable. Conscientisation, empowerment and analysis of the development myth – antidote for culture of lies.

Net-working with likeminded groups to restore democratic values and equality of citizens. 'de-commodification' of education; against indiscriminate industrialization that cause deadly effects on all life.

On reconciliation and peace with justice. Among the people there is a breakthrough in building relationships between North and South but that is not quite evident among the clergy and religious.

Can the Holy Family sisters in our divided country rise to this challenge? It is not a vague interconnectedness but something to do with our attitudes, values, long history of hurts and wounds. God is summoning us through our painful history to live the mission of Communion – Good news of New Life.

JAFFNA

THE CURRENT CONTEXT

Political situation

The 30 years of protracted war in the North and East that tore apart the people of Sri Lanka has been brought to an end in 2009 with mixed feelings of relief and joy to the majority, while for the minority Tamils it brought chaos, death and destruction. Thousands have been uprooted from their original homeland, ended up in camps and now are in the process of being resettled.

Since the end of war, a lot of infrastructure development like tarmac roads, railway lines, bridges, hospitals, schools etc. are being built. However, the military presence in these areas remains considerable, leading to human rights violations, including land-grabbing; land conflicts may become even more subject to the arbitrary, following a ruling by the Supreme Court stipulating that land is

now a prerogative of the central government and not of provincial councils, overturning 25 years of legal ruling.

The issue of devolution of power has been at the forefront of the search for a political solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict for the past nearly six decades. The Northern Provincial Council election is one of the most positive political developments in post-war Sri Lanka. It reintegrates the northern polity into the democratic system and gives recognition to the regional voice of this constituency.

Yet, as per the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, setting up of High Courts in each Province and the granting of the police and land powers are not in effect currently.

The landslide victory of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) at the Northern Provincial election was achieved amidst widespread intimidation of the military and Central Government, to stop Tamils from voting.

The attacks on media especially in the North are atrocious; journalists killed and injured, presses burnt and demolished but no culprits arrested despite the heavy military presence. The UN secretary for Human Rights visited the Northern Province in August this year, she met with people in these areas and after her visit she said that she had received reports that people in villages and settlements in the Mullaitivu area were visited by police or military officers both before and after she arrived there.

Socio-cultural situation

The A9 Road that connects the North with other parts of Sri Lanka is proliferated with Buddha statues and Viharas due to

the heavy military presence. The military and their unrestrained movements in the Vanni region have created a fear syndrome among the people and high abuse of women and girls are reported.

To add to the genocidal terror, on 31st August 2013, women in three coastal villages in the Kilinochchi District (Veravil, Valaipadu and Kiranchi) were subjected to forced **Coercive Population Control** by implanting Progesteron-only subdermal implants(POSD), a long term hormonal birth control mechanism being inserted under the skin of the upper arms of women. Those who refused were threatened by the doctors and nurses that no medical treatment will be administered in the hospital for them thereafter. Our sisters are presently residing and ministering among them.

Thousands of outstanding enforced disappearance cases are yet to be investigated or resolved denying the victims' families right to truth, justice and reparation. *The post war scenario is lacking processes for reconciliation and peace to bring healing for almost six decades' ethnic conflict and solidarity among North and South to respect the diversity of each other and to live in Unity.*

Economy

The Northern Province, before the war and displacement, was an Agricultural and fisheries-dominant province. The majority of the population are farmers, fishermen and professionals in the civil and business sectors. Now, more than 100,000 people are still in Welfare Centres or residing with friends and relatives.

The civilians' lands were forcefully taken over; 90-95% has not been handed back. 6,381 acres of land in the Valikamam

North alone is still under the high security zone and the security forces are engaged in farming in this very fertile red-soil region, depriving the people of the soil, their livelihood. The people are not fighting for compensation or any form of grant, but want the military to leave their land now, so that they can regain their self-reliance.

The coastal belt is dotted with newly built houses and bungalows for the high officials in the security forces for their rest and holiday together with hotels and a Yoghurt Factory being built, thwarting the hope of resettling and earning a livelihood by the owners of these lands.

Role of the Church in the Northern Province

Working for sustainable peace through reconciliation is a mammoth task that awaits the Church as well as the Nation

and upholding justice and peace is a struggle for the Bishops, the clergy and the Religious Congregations in the North. While journeying with the people in humanitarian needs, they have fearlessly voiced and daringly taken the necessary steps to bring to the notice of the respective authorities the concerns of the people. Some priests engaged in Peace and Reconciliation efforts have even received life threats. However the polarizing mind-sets and lack of genuine interest in reconciliation process jeopardize the witnessing and communion in clergy and religious nationally.

Yes, it's a great challenge for us as members of PBN one family to build trust, respect the diversity and to live in solidarity. It's our call today not to give up on faith, to heal each other and to live in harmony with the whole cosmos.

THE PHILIPPINES

POLITICAL SYSTEM: Philippines is a Constitutional, Presidential, Representative and Democratic Republic. The president is the head of the state with a Multi-party system which evolves around 3 separate, independent, branches namely- the Legislative, the Executive and the Judicial.

SOCIO-CULTURAL: The population of the country is estimated roughly as 98 million. Except for the Muslim minority in the South and upland Tribals sprinkled here and there, Filipinos are a homogenous people Differences are Religious-Socio- Cultural rather than Ethnic or racial. About 11% of the Filipinos have migrated to USA and other European and Middle East countries. A large

number of rural migrants continue to flow into Metropolitan areas like Manila. Some 11 languages and 87 dialects are spoken here. Filipino and English continue to be the medium of instruction.

FILIPINO CULTURE is a blend of indigenous traditions with Malay, Hispanic and American cultures and also the traits of the Chinese, Indonesian and the Indian. It is a colourful and lively culture that makes the Filipinos distinctive. Despite all the influences the native moral codes are still intact, of which respect for family, veneration of elders, friendliness and hospitality are a few to mention. Filipinos are fond of socializing, dancing and music, naturally artistic and creative.



growth observed by the IMF, there is extreme poverty. 27% percent of the population is living under the poverty line. Unemployment and underemployment rates have increased. Landless peasants have no access to capital. There is significant job loss in the Agrarian sector due to extreme weather conditions – such as typhoons, flash floods and other similar disasters. The government’s help and Foreign aid are unable to solve the problem, partly owing to ever-increasing population and corruptive practices.

ECCLESIA (THE CHURCH): The country remains pre-dominantly Catholic: 82%, Islam 6%, and the rest of the population affiliated to other Christian Churches and a

HEALTH AND EDUCATION: Over the past years, the struggle against diseases has considerably progressed. Most health care services are concentrated in urban areas. The country has severe health problems owing to malnutrition. A high rate of child-birth, pulmonary and cardio-vascular, gastro-intestinal disorders are the main health hazards. Though the Government gives assistance to provide its people with a better life, the resources available are very much limited to serve the targeted groups.

ECONOMY: The Philippines is a developing country with a diversified economy which consists of 54.5% GDP service, 13.8% agriculture and 31% industries like food processing, textiles, electronics and automobile parts. The best performing is the Banking sector, Trade and mining. Remittance from the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) is the highest source of Foreign Exchange. In spite of the economic

small number of Buddhists and tribal Animists. The Mother Church, through the **CBCP (Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines)** and the **AMRSP (Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines)**, tied up with some local NGOs continue to be the refuge and voice of the voiceless, keeps on calling and challenging the Administration for good governance, to be transparent in all Government Agencies, Expenditure and ways of serving the people. In general, the Church has proven its credibility strongly manifesting its obligation recently regarding the Reproductive Health Bill. On the other hand it has lacked credibility because of the many scandals and questionable quality of services to the people., Generally speaking, the Church and State today maintain cordial relationships despite differing in opinion over specific issues. With the guarantee of religious freedom in the Philippines, the Roman Catholic clergy remain in the political background as a source of moral influence, especially during elections.



Holy Family of Bordeaux
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