

19th GENERAL CHAPTER

2014

INFORMATION ON THE CONTEXT

AMERICA



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,

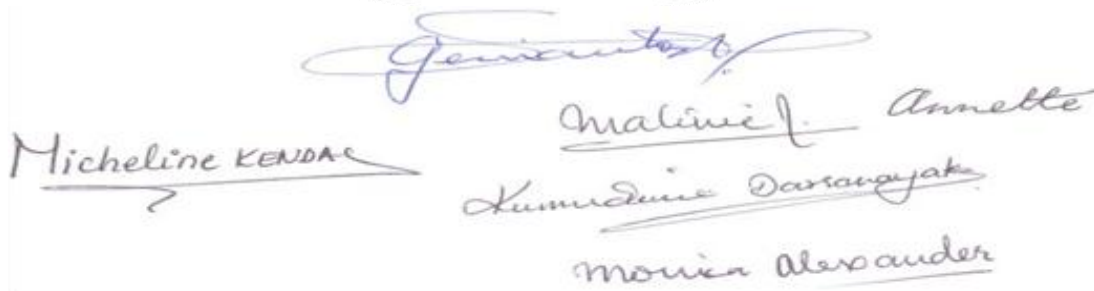
As you know, each Unit has been asked to present its situation briefly in preparation for the General Chapter.

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. This is the fourth 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.



Genier
Micheline KENDAE
Maliniel Annette
Kumudini Dasranyaka
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

CANADA



Bruce Jones Design Inc. 1992

Canada is a country of such enormous extension that our “Holy Family” has only been able to explore a minimum part – situated to the East, in the province of Quebec. Going back to the year 1901, we can still admire the arrival of our Founding Sisters, eight strong women with fire in their hearts, who face this country of snows under difficult conditions, because it was only

just entering the industrial age, and the social needs were enormous. The inhabitants of the towns of Montreal and Quebec, at the beginning of the 20th Century were very varied in their origins but history tells us they were remarkably homogeneous. The Sisters founded a community that could not be more intercultural: French, Spanish, Irish, English, and the following year, German.

In a short time, day after day, their zeal for the mission went beyond the confines of Montreal, and our Family charism knew expansion in several areas of the province, both in the number of Sisters, and the number of insertions.

After the Second world War, came a time of rapid industrialisation and exploitation of the extremely abundant natural resources, and the country experienced an upsurge in prosperity which changed the standard of living of the majority of the population. It was a time marked by the arrival of a huge number of immigrants.

Some Policies give rise to questions and concerns today about the state of our planet and the responsibility of all regarding ecology and climate – for example, the withdrawal of Canada from the Kyoto Accords, the cancelling of the Kélowna Agreement, the colossal cuts in foreign aid and diminished respect for the rights of the indigenous peoples.

In the **economic sphere**, aerospace, biotechnology, the pharmaceutical industry, engineering, metallurgy and information technology figure among the key sectors of the post-industrial economy of Quebec.

At **societal level**, statistics reveal that Quebec has become a rather more egalitarian society since 2003, as a result of the social programmes which cover the whole population. Nevertheless, 10% of the population is still living on the poverty line, according to norms established by the social Services. Numerous community organisations have been set up to reach out to those most deprived of the basic

essentials, to defend human rights, to work with new arrivals. The religious are very active in these areas.

Religion - We are in a climate of secularisation and the Church, like all the other religions, is undergoing constant questioning from our modern society, to the extent that religion is relegated to the private sphere.

In contrast to our history up to the 60s, religion can no longer claim to be the foundation of our national identity, nor to define social institutions. Material prosperity, liberty of morals, the promise of unlimited progress, unbridled consumerism, personality cults are the domains in which people seek to realise their dreams, with no reference to God.

We are facing a general crisis of meaning, and a spiritual void. We are at a crossroads of major questions. Our society is a melting pot of cultures – can we see these as possible bearers of new fruitfulness?

The greatest challenge today is to see how we can transmit our religious heritage? How to live today an ecclesiology of communion? How to situate ourselves in this globalised and pluralist world? How to renew our language and translate the message of the Gospel in such a way that it can touch our contemporaries and be understood by them? We have to listen to the thirst expressed by our populations, in order to sow among them some seeds of hope and meaning, and to reveal, to uncover the action of the Breath of Life that is always present, always active, always ready to give birth to the new.

LATIN AMERICA

The Holy Family Network of Latin America consists of four “Southern Cone” countries: Brazil (where the Holy Family has been present for more than 100 years), Paraguay (48 years) Argentina (43 years) and Peru (37 years).

BRAZIL



Socialist government - It is the largest country in South America and well positioned in the global economy. It has a mixed economy that includes market-based capitalism and socialist planning. Despite this, there is still a large number of poor people.

Numerically Brazil is the country with the most Catholics in the world, 163 million representing 85% of the population. However in recent times the church had to face the challenge of losing credibility, the growth of religious indifference, alienation of the youth and growth of Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostals within and outside the Catholic Church. Religious Life is very well organized.

PARAGUAY



Paraguay is a landlocked country and deeply dependent satellite of Brazil and Argentina which it has to use to reach the sea and carry on their import-export trade. There are approximately 6,000,000 inhabitants, most of them young.

Politically it is a formal democracy that fails to unite for real change. One of the great challenges of the Government is to fight extreme poverty and environmental abuse. It is estimated that around 1.2 million Paraguayans live in extreme poverty. A growing wave of violence has been observed in recent times, along with, widespread corruption, environmental destruction, mass cultivation of Genetically modified crops.

ARGENTINA

Center-left government - The issue of drug trafficking is a truly worrying problem that the bishops have echoed. The youth are disoriented, without hope for the future.

The possibilities of access to education have been expanded and extended to far corners of the country, however the level of education, once relatively good, has dropped tremendously at all levels from primary to university. Research is very poorly paid and little encouraged. Health care has improved and free public hospitals are better equipped.

The Church is more daring, less tied to the powerful, but with a clericalist, pyramidal ecclesiology. Part of Religious Life is very well organized, with openness, vision and commitment, with its life threatened, and another part is on its own.



PERU



Population density: Population in 2012 is approximately 30,135,875 inhabitants. People over 65 account for 6%. It has a high life expectancy (76 years) and literacy (97%). Currently, Peru is a country categorized as an emerging economy, stable and suitable for investment. Despite its rapid economic growth, it continues to show problematic social and labour rates. The infant mortality rate is 21 per 1000 live births, before the age of five years, well above other countries in Latin America.

The Peruvians are a people with strong popular religiosity. The great majority of them are Catholic with Charismatic and Neocatechumenal groups strong amongst them. Religious Life is well appreciated.

ARGENTINA

CONTEMPLATIVE RELIGIOUS - POSADAS

Human and Christian CONTEXT middle of the Province of Misiones, where we live as Contemplative Sisters of the Holy Family.

The Community of Posadas is inserted in the Province of Misiones, recognized as such since 1953, just 60 years ago. This Province is in northeast Argentina, where there is a triple frontier with Paraguay and Brazil. This triple border is popular for all kinds of business, including "trafficking in persons and drug smuggling."

Misiones now has three dioceses: the first, the Diocese of Posadas created in 1957, the second, that of Iguazu created in 1986: the third, the Diocese of Obera created in 2009. The whole territory of the Province is called "Misiones" because of the contribution and the gigantic work accomplished mainly by the Jesuits in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries among

the natives of the region. We often see written "*orgullosos ser misioneros.*" (*Proud to be from Misiones*) We are also proud to be "Misioneras" even though we attribute another meaning to the word.

At a social level, Misiones has developed considerably, especially in relation to tourism; it has a lot to "to show" in this sense. It is the level of education which remains low: lack of schools, colleges, although it is recognized that there has been some progress. On the religious level, a diocesan clergy is emerging, but religious priests are still in the majority. The Christian life requires strong formation and commitment. The promotion of the laity and the necessary training is one of the pastoral priorities. There is proliferation of evangelical churches. "Often ordinary people move from one church to another without realizing.

This context, where the Holy Family contemplative community is living is "very young"

- 60 years as a Province
- 55 for the first diocese
- 10 years for the Seminary "Santo Cura de Ars", for the integral formation of Diocesan Priests.
- More than half of the population is under 30 years old.

There is an exception to this "youth" statistic: the "original peoples" who were already living in this region in the year 1000. These indigenous people are disadvantaged both in the lack of recognition of their identity, and by the unbridled exploitation of the environment. Here, as in many other parts of the world the "powerful" are lords and masters.

The Contemplative community has been present for 20 years in Posadas, the capital of the Province of Misiones. All the different realities challenge us. In accord with our vocation, we feel we are members of the human and Christian milieu, responsible for a real though discreet presence, a wordless proclamation of the Primacy of God for every human being, and his predilection for the humble and the



little ones. We believe in the call of the Lord Jesus who "launched us into this adventure, which is his own." Like many people in the area we live the anxiety and the hope of building a better world where everyone will be recognized as brothers and sisters, members of the One Family of God-Trinity. This energizes us and helps us to "go forward."



Holy Family of Bordeaux
Communications / Information Service
Rome
www.saintefamillebordeaux.org