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## New Mission

Sr. Jusciêda Maria Mendez (BR) has taken on the ministry as assessor of the Mission Sector in the National Conference of Religious of Brazil. Sister is living in Brazilia, the capital of Brazil and the Headquarters of the National Conference of Religious. Sister Jusciêda lives as part of an inter-congregational community in the Conference's residence with seven sisters from various communities who all serve in different ministries in the National Conference.

As part of Sister Jusciêda's ministry she is responsible for the Ongoing Formation of Religious and laity around four focus areas which include Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation on a national level.



Sister Jusciêda presents at interreligious gathering. Sister is responsible for the Ongoing Formation of Religious and laity in Brazil.



Sr. Jusciêda Maria Mendez (BR) is currently ministering as the assessor of the Mission Sector in the National Conference of Religious of Brazil. Sister is living in Brazilia, the capital of Brazil and the Headquarters of the National Conference of Religious.

Sister also organizes a reflection group of religious from the black and indigenous communities. She directs a Brazilian network created in 2006 called “A Cry for Life” which is part of Talitha Kum, headquartered in Rome, which works to abolish Human Trafficking. Finally, Sister Jusciêda works in partnership with the Brazilian National Bishop’s Conference with the laity who are connected with congregational charisms.

Sister Jusciêda remarked: “As a Felician Sister, I am happy to be serving in our Conference. I am asking for your prayers because I know working here means a lot, This is a big issue and a big challenge in my life.”

- S. Jusciêda Maria Araujo Menezes, BR -



Sister Jusciêda prays and lives as part of an inter-congregational community in the Conference’s residence with seven sisters from various communities who all serve in different ministries in the National Conference.



Sister Jusciêda takes part in a prayer service with other religious in Brazil.



Catholic Sisters at a rally against human trafficking.



*Challenges exist to be overcome!  
Let us be realists, but without  
losing our joy, our boldness  
and our hope-filled commitment.  
Let us not allow ourselves  
to be robbed  
of missionary vigour!*

*(Pope Francis)*

# Bakhita

## Networks

On November 17-19, 2017, I participated in a “BAKHITA NETWORKS Workshop” held in Częstochowa, Poland. The workshop was organized by the BAKHITA Network for the Prevention and Support of Victims of Contemporary Slavery. Over 60 people participated in the meeting: sisters from different congregations, one priest from the African Missionary Congregation (White Fathers) and lay people.

The purpose of the meeting was to familiarize participants with the issue of modern slavery, also called “trafficking in human beings.” Among the topics discussed were: Trafficking in Human Beings as a Phenomenon and Factors Conducive to Trafficking in Human Beings, both presented by Sr. Anna Balchan SMI; Methods of Counteracting Trafficking, which was discussed by S. Joanna Lipowska FMM; Rational Behavioral Therapy and Motivational Dialogue, which was presented by Sonia Krystoń; and Experience That Inspires, which was a presentation of good and effective actions of religious sisters from different communities in the field. Since the beginning of its existence in 2006, Polish Network BAKHITA has cooperated with the European Network RENATE, which presents



the activities by the Polish members.

The issue of modern slavery deserves attention. For example it concerns 27 million people, including more than 15,000 Polish people, who are trafficked each year. These are the most poor, the most helpless and needy.

A man, who has been deprived of control over his life, is harassed and treated like a slave, can live close to us and be even within sight of us. We may not see him or may be afraid to reach out to him because of lack of knowledge and courage. Therefore, the most precious thing in the workshop was to receive from God and the people present the belief that we could help in the prevention of trafficking and help the victims of trafficking. This power comes from a greater awareness, alertness, sensitivity





and commitment. The power of evil is great, but we are not helpless before it, for “there is one who is the Savior of the world (and thou art not).”

A closer look at the problem of modern slavery

requires a new way of thinking about ministry and apostolate. Many of the religious sisters present reach out to victims of trafficking who are not able to come to church. Therefore, the Church must go to them. This form of service is called “street-working,” i.e. working on the street, going out to those who live on the street.

On the third day, the participants listened to a very interesting conference on *The Fire That Will Lead us to Man* by Father Martin Ciechanowski, OSPPE. Father spoke about God, who is so good and merciful that he even looks upon the sinful man with fondness. Father also developed the idea that we - Christians - are not sent “to the people,” but we are sent “FROM GOD to the people.”

During the workshops that took place in Częstochowa, there was no shortage of meetings with Mary at Jasna Góra. Every day, even many times a day, we could visit her in the Miraculous Chapel and entrust her with the difficult things we talked about, as well as all our own and commended intentions.

- SM Mariana Michalik, WA -



# Cooperation With the SURSUM CORDA Association

The SURSUM CORDA Association (Latin for “raise up your hearts”) was founded in 2000 as a support group for the Youth Educational Center in Mszana Dolna, a youth ministry of what is known as the “railway church,” The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Nowy Sącz.



Sisters sharing food and something to drink with those who are hungry.

## SURSUM CORDA

is a non-governmental, apolitical, non-profit organization devoted to social welfare, prevention and education in the broad sense. The association’s activities are performed by members engaged in healthcare, education, re-socializing, and therapeutic activities. They also work with a wide range of volunteers with different specializations. The aim of SURSUM CORDA is to carry out public tasks including:

- social assistance, including assistance to families and people in difficult situations and equal opportunities for these families and persons;
- charity;
- protection and promotion of health;
- activities for the benefit of people with disabilities;
- promotion of employment and occupational activation of the unemployed;
- activities supporting the development of communities and local communities;
- science, education, and upbringing;
- sightseeing and recreation for children and youth;
- counteracting social pathologies;
- helping victims of catastrophes and natural disasters;
- promotion and organization of volunteering;
- technical training, informational or financial support for non-governmental organizations and other entities.

SURSUM CORDA pursues these goals for the benefit of the general public, especially children and young people. Since 2016 the association has been working closely with the Holy Family kindergarten of the Felician Sisters in Nowy Sącz. The children from our Felician kindergarten have been collecting bottle tops for the association. These preschoolers have learned the importance of kind assistance to others.

The preschoolers also join in the Santa Claus action “YOU TOO can become a Santa Claus!” The kindergarten will send a description of a given child’s situation to the association. These stories are then put on the association’s Santa Claus website and people of good will meet these children’s dreams. In addition, volunteers of the Sursum Corda Association run the kindergarten’s annual carnival parties and children’s festivities. The kindergarten donates the funds for these parties to charity activities of the association.



- SM Magdalena Zamorska, KR-



S.M. Joela Wilczek and S.M. Blanka Kruk serving the poor in Krakow.

## Stations of the Forest

Jericho House, a retreat center in Welland, Ontario, Canada co-directed by Sister Jacqueline Keefe, is setting up “Stations of the Forest” in the 15 acres of Carolinian forest that is part of the property.



A client of Community Living—an agency close to Jericho House which supports and helps the physically and mentally challenged. This young woman loves to walk in nature and especially the forest trails around Jericho House. She loves to speak on how she incorporates her spirituality while walking in nature.

Using the traditional “Stations of the Cross” format we are setting up these “Stations of the Forest” to lament the stages in the death of many parts of



God’s creation and commit themselves to hopeful acts of resurrection. We believe that it is important to educate and raise awareness of the plight of creation and our earth community for ourselves and all our guests. The Gospel challenges us all to deepen our “three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor and with the earth itself.” (Laudato Si’ 66)

The Earth’s natural assets are made up of plants,

*Let us be renewed by God’s mercy ... and let us become agents of this mercy, channels through which God can water the earth, protect all creation and make justice and peace flourish.*

*(Pope Francis)*

animals, land, water, the atmosphere and humans. Together we all form part of the planet’s ecosystems, which presently is undergoing a crisis endangering all species’ health and livelihoods beyond the point of no return.

The forest around Jericho House in the winter.

Currently we, as humans, are using over 25% more natural resources than the planet can sustain. Put simply, accelerating biodiversity loss and rapid climate change risks human and non-human security, meaning millions face an unsustainable future.

The Jericho House Butterfly Meadow project saw the planting of 2000+ wildflowers. This project will preserve, protect, and improve the natural environment and resources of the local community. In addition, it will educate and foster an awareness of the value of the natural environment and its resources



With the “Stations of the Forest” we, here at Jericho House, want to “allow our guests’ creativity and imagination to choose the times and spaces when they want to pause for growth, learn something new; change behaviours and lifestyles, be awed by silence or birdsong, create something new from something old, write a poem, draw a favorite tree, collect twigs or look and listen intently or intentionally for the presence of the One who holds us together in unconditional love.

The Labyrinth, which is one of the Stations of the Cross at Jericho House! The prints you see in the rust colored path are from the deer coming to be part of the prayer and meditation. A guest once remarked, "I didn't know that deer pray"!!!



- SM Jacqueline Keefe, NA -

# Prayer Intentions



*To pray for fair trade  
and ethical business activities.*

God, You know how much injustice and harm arises from unethical business activities and unfair trade. That is why we come to You today asking that international trade agreements provide just and fair compensation to developing countries for importing their products and allow governments to protect local food producers and small businesses through subsidies and support. We ask that all international trade agreements protect the rights of each country, prioritizing the good of society over profit. May the leaders of countries, entering into international trade agreements, respect the rights of society and the responsibility of the government for the welfare of its citizens. We also ask for simple honesty of every seller and buyer. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



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## Abbreviations

- Rome, Italy – RO
- Kraków, Poland – KR
- North America – NA
- Przemyśl, Poland – PR
- Warszawa, Poland – WA
- Curitiba PR, Brazil – BR
- Embu, Kenya – KE