The novelist John Gardner once said that there are only two plots to all the stories ever told and they are: a stranger came to town and someone went on a journey. Every time one takes to the road, or makes a journey it becomes a learning experience. The road itself is a teacher, as you will see in this edition of CJ News. Take to the road and you become wiser!! No wonder our Pope said, “Uscire, Uscire” (Go out ...Go out...) and allow the Jesus in you to move out to others, healing, teaching, loving!! Do not stay in .....others need you.. out there. The CJ News brings you the many “on-the-road experiences” of people.

Brasiliana – report by Jane Livesey CJ

This is a brief description of some of the more remote places and missions where our sisters work in the huge country of Brazil. It does not describe everything we, (Elena and I) saw and everyone we met but tries to give a flavour of those two and a half weeks where we were on the move almost all the time and covering thousands of kilometres in both plane and car, thanks to the Brazilian province that made all our arrangements.

All of the communities we visited in these two weeks are in remote places where the majority, if not all, of the people are poor and our sisters work with them both in a catechetical and also a pastoral role, in collaboration (more or less, depending on personalities) with the local parish priest. In Vitoria do Xingu there are two members and their main work is catechesis of the young people and visiting in the “communities”. Each parish in rural (and indeed urban) Brazil is huge and made up of a number – anything between 20 and 40 – of smaller communities, some in the actual town in which the parish is located and the majority in the “interior” hinterland to that parish. These “interior” communities might see the priest anything from once a month (unusual) to once a year, depending on the size of the parish, the number of such communities, the distances involved and the difficulties of transport – more of that when we arrive in Amazonas.

In the Vitoria region of Pará there has been much de-forestation by the local people to create pasture for their very few livestock – usually one cow and a couple of goats, the latter being ubiquitous in the north of Brazil, where not a sheep is to be seen as they are just not tough enough for the climate. But there are also large farms which have just been appropriated illegally and the people turned off what little land they had. The usual social problems abound – high birth rates, usually out of wedlock, much abuse of
alcohol (beer) and drugs. But somehow the people seem very cheerful and, as always, seem to overcome all the obstacles to keeping clothes clean. The younger women in particular take great care to look good – nail polish, gleaming hair, good clothes. But, although there are three schools, and most go to school, their prospects are slight and unemployment, especially among the young, is very high. The whole of Altamira (the capital) and Vitoria (the region) are dominated by the nearby giant HEP station – multi-national. It brings in migrant squatters seeking work from surrounding states who are in the rural equivalent of favelas. The town of Vitoria is about 18,000 in population and although all houses are very small and simple (just a square block with holes for windows), those who work for the HEP station have access to money so many have TV and satellite dishes and mobiles. The price is that the damage to the local environment is very high indeed and will get higher as vast areas go under water to make the reservoir which will power the station. Other ways of earning a living include farming and work on the HEP station but many face nothing but lifelong unemployment… Contrasts abound – motorbikes which roar around the small town, some very big and powerful (owned, of course, by those who have got work in the HEP station); and donkey-driven carts for transporting goods, e.g. the plentiful fish currently fished in the Xingu river – though for how much longer no-one knows, as pollution increases.

After being in Xingu 48 hours we left on the third morning at 6.30am en route for Amazonas state via a visit to the Altamira bishop, a very fine Austrian missionary – Erwin Krautler - who has been in Brazil for almost 50 years, for over 30 of which he has been a bishop. He is outspoken in his defence of the indigenous people against the depredations of both the government (land grabs) and the HEP station and its consequences, both ecological and social, for the area. His speaking of the truth to power over the years means that he now has 24 hour security, paid for, interestingly, by the state government. All we spoke to described him as a “prophet”. We felt very privileged to meet him.

Our next stop was the remote village of Murituba, which is one of the string of tiny communities along the Amazon, access to which is only from the river – a fact which completely governs the lives of those who live there. It takes very little time there to understand what an artery in every sense the river is – without it there would be no lifeblood pumping the Amazonas. When the river rises, as it does inexorably during the rainy season which lasts till the end of June, it eventually reaches the communities, so all the houses are built on stilts and during the months when the water has overrun the river banks (you can see how high it gets from the line on the side of the buildings – probably an increase of about five to six metres on average) people just get around by boat – and that includes going to the local shop, to school and to church, even next door!

Families here are large and extended and people are very poor. The community has very few facilities – no mobile signal, no internet (except in the school which is, of course, locked outside school hours) and just one public phone for the whole community. However, what almost every house has, in common with even the poorest places that we saw, is a huge satellite dish (the biggest are about six feet in diameter) and the television seems to accompany every activity up to and including sleeping. The imbalance between the numbers of men and women we saw was very marked. Many of the men leave to find work in cities in Amazonas or further afield.

When it came to Mass about 60 people attended and we were dive-bombed throughout by all kinds of large insects as well as swarms of mosquitoes, and spent a lot of time crunching on the scarab beetles underfoot. Mass in Brazil in general is an
experience. There is much female participation (partly, presumably, because in general, apart from a few usually older men, the male gender is conspicuous by its absence) and full participation – including being invited to hold up the gifts at the doxology. Music and singing are central and the enthusiasm is palpable – the reading of the gospel is always followed by a round of lively applause, at least outside the cities.

After Amazonas we moved to Piauí, which is a very poor undeveloped agricultural state, red in soil (as is all of Brazil) that we saw. Most people live off the land as far as they can and the roads appear to spend more time being homes to flocks of goats, and herds of donkeys and [fewer] cattle than they do to motor vehicles.

Paes Landim is a small town with a sizeable Catholic church and Catholic community – and three other denominations – but also a large non church-going population. Our sisters work with the parish priest and are responsible for a number of areas – they support the team of catechists; one works every morning in the parish secretariat and the other has a women’s adult literacy class three mornings a week and runs a monthly programme for children under 6 from the parish and the outlying communities, which includes weighing, provision of supplements for those who are malnourished and generally supporting the mothers. They are both involved in general parish support such as preparation of the liturgy. On Mondays there is a big market in the town and they keep open house for any Catholics who come in from the interior and just want to come and chat or seek advice. They also continue a project which has been going for fourteen years, having been founded by the CJ not long after they arrived there. Next door to our house the parish bought what amounts to a large kitchen garden and this is divided into plots. A group of 10 women are part of a self-help project which involves growing and then selling their own vegetables. They then keep the income other than in investing in the seeds for the following year. It is small but seems to work very well – one woman has been doing it for 10 years. The sisters also run what is called the “youth pastoral” in which they work with and train young people aged 14 to 23 or so either as catechists or leaders in the church - and that group has grown from 8 to 50 in the past two years (it definitely helps that the two sisters concerned are in their 40s and 30s). As part of this, on two mornings a week Sister Eliana does a one hour broadcast on the town radio on religious themes, including readings, hymns and so on, together with some of the young people. Collaboration with the parish priest is excellent, which, sadly, is not always the case.

Our next visit in Piaui state was to the parish of São Jão do Piauí. The community of three now works in collaboration with the parish priest and, because of their own ages, tends to work more with the programme for older people, the sick and in two of the nearby poor communities. One of these, on the outskirts of the town, has been without water for over six months, despite the fact that the people pay taxes - and there is no sign of the authorities restoring the water any time soon. So the people have to get water from the irregular deliveries in big tankers – and pay for it, thus in effect paying twice. The other community, like many of these communities, is what is known as an “invasion” community – i.e. poor local people or migrants from elsewhere, usually looking for work, just commandeer a patch of land and build on it. As a result they have a roof over their heads – and over time, if they get work, they can make improvements. However, all are vulnerable in that if the government ever chose to do so it could throw them out of the house and off the land…

From São Jão do Rio Pardo we moved on to the state of Minas Gerais.
Our destination was another small community outside a big town – Braunas – where three of our sisters animate the local Catholic community and the priest comes once a month for Mass. On our first evening there was a very well-attended holy hour. The following morning, before the conversations with the sisters, there was a Mass in the community chapel for about 20 local “Friends of Mary Ward” – principally women – who are clearly devoted both to Mary Ward and to the community. At the end of Mass they sang a specially written hymn to Mary Ward, which all knew by heart and which I found one of the most moving moments of the whole visitation these people in a place she would never even have heard of, inspired by her in the living out of their day to day lives. They meet once a month and clearly value the opportunity both to learn more about Mary Ward and to pray together. We met two further such groups later in the visitation and the experience was exactly the same – very uplifting and heartwarming. In the state of Paraná we visited the two last “diaspora” communities of the province, one founded in 1971 and one only in 2011. Both are in small towns – Santa Maria d’Oeste and Perola d’Oeste – and the work of the members follows the usual pattern in these places – training of catechists and other leaders in the community, youth pastoral, third age pastoral… In Santa Maria we met another very active Friends of Mary Ward group who were vocal in their appreciation of the community of three, one of whom had been a founding member of the community over 40 years ago and whose return last year was clearly a great joy for the people.

As St John says at the end of his gospel – I could write much more but I hope that this brief account of some of the places where our sisters are on mission in far-flung parts of Brazil has given the reader an idea of the way in which Mary Ward and her vision are playing their part in the lives of many people whose country she had never even heard of.

In our own inimitable style- Prisca CJ reports

Via Nomentana 250 has its own unique and inimitable style of offering hospitality and working in collaboration with different organizations be it the Taizé group, Scouts from Poland for the canonization of Pope John Paul 11, our own CJs, IBVMs or even other pilgrims.

The Collaboration of Men and Women for a Healthier Church and Society, one of the working groups of the JPIC, experienced the warm CJ welcome and hospitality, here on 29th May. The working group organized a reflection day facilitated by Felix CPPs, (JPIC Co-Secretary) and Prisca CJ. An exercise in collaboration led by Elisabeth CJ, sparked off the prayer led by Prisca. A few minutes were set aside for a short self-introduction and expectation sharing by the reflection group members. There were 35 participants, men and women, belonging to 15 congregations and 18 cultural groups. Personal stories of successful collaboration were shared in small groups followed by a deeper analysis of the various elements which contributed to their success.
Symbolic representation of the stories by each small group brought out the ideas more powerfully. From the six stories shared by the small groups the assembled group had the task of deciding on one story to be analyzed under the headings of culture, power structure, humanity and responsibility. The process to select the story was very collaborative and democratic. In the final analysis the Culture-Iceberg was looked at.

This was followed by sharing the inspiration from Scripture (Rom. 16,1-16) and elements from the congregational charisms. The evaluation that followed brought out clearly the value of experience sharing and the collaboration experienced in the process itself and we were left with the challenge to keep up the momentum by follow up sessions. The participants were in full praise of the collaboration between the facilitators, between the Generalate team and the community, the great time they had and the great CJ hospitality they enjoyed.

Thanks to Cristina Irsara and team for the wonderful breaks with snacks laid out outside our piastra in the beautiful morning sun and lunch with the community!

A new step forward in Manila in the footsteps of Mary Ward:
a Report by Srs. Janet IBVM, Alma CJ and Marilyn CJ

On 30th January, as we sat together around the symbolic presentation consisting of two streams originating from Mary Ward and heading forward in the same direction side by side, with the symbolic pictures floating and following the rhythm of the river, first and foremost we looked at Mary Ward and at each other with a smile. We were told to choose the picture symbolizing each one of us and with its help share our story within the group. All twelve of us Hoa (Vietnam); Batilda, Katerina, Marta, Bosco and Cecilia (Korea), Teresa (China), Chris, Natalie and Janet (Australia), Marilyn and Alma (India) shared, each one in her capacity to express in English.
We found the sharing very revealing and enriching.

To make the occasion more solemn we moved into the dining room and enjoyed various types of dishes prepared by our sisters from Australia, Korea, Vietnam and China with much love.

As we rejoiced this coming together in Manila, we are sure that in heaven, too, Mary Ward and our Sisters who have gone ahead of us looked at the Triune God with a smile of joy and gratitude. Around 8.00 pm the three of us (Janet, Alma and Marilyn) who are attending the leadership course at EAPI (East Asian Pastoral Institute) Manila came away wishing them good night and telling each other that it is indeed good to be together. It was one of the rarest moments for us when we met the Sisters from different parts of the world united in prayer. There was much joy and exchange of words.

We felt the sacredness of the atmosphere there. When Chris expressed her feelings with regard to the urgency of coming together of CJ and IBVM, there was a feeling of belonging to the combined community of Mary Ward women. Although a number of sisters have limited English we nonetheless related to each other and got to know one another. It was an experience of communion, breaking of bread with each other in the presence of our God.

Mary Ward Poly-Technic School, Chile.
A Report from Srs. Marité Aedo CJ and Nely Parada

Thanks for help from the Solidarity Fund.

The Mary Ward Polytechnic School, in a rural area of San Ignacio, Chile, offers education from kindergarten level to professional technical education. The pre-school or kindergarten levels were taking place in the same building as the basic or primary educational level. The new Ministry of Education regulations demand that obligatory pre-school education take place in buildings separate from basic or primary.

The Polytechnic is a CJ school, but with State support, which means that it is a free school for poor families. However, state support does not stretch to the maintenance of buildings; that is the responsibility of the CJ as the entity collaborating with the State.

Constructing a new building for pre-school education means looking for outside financing. We received part of the money from the Swek di Ster-singer (Children’s Mission), and the other part from the CJ Generalate. Sr. Marité, Provincial, and Sr. Nely Parada, legal representative of the school, are grateful for the Generalate’s generous support through the Solidarity Fund.

The apostolic advantages from using the help from the fund have been:
- Construction of a building suitable for the education of pre-school children responding to the needs and to current regulations
- Offering a full school day for children at this level which is a help for the mothers who are employed as ‘seasonal workers’, or as domestics, to support their families financially.
We were greatly surprised and visibly delighted to witness this great family celebration of our Superior’s sixtieth Birthday. The family members were received with great joy and warm affection, and they stayed overnight. They took Cristina for a birthday dinner, and to crown it all, offered sixty marguerites with different messages of love and affection attached on each stalk; this time definitely in the bar!

Indian sisters in England—Mary Walmsley CJ

In May 2014, the CJ English province was privileged to host a visit of ten CJ sisters from India and Nepal. They had come to immerse themselves in Mary Ward's own country, the better to acquaint themselves with her spirit and ethos. It was a wonderful time for all. They experienced the hospitality of the Community, the Bar Convent staff and facilities, the warmth of the many people they encountered from fellow guests, from Mary Ward Association lay members, the people of York and those they met on their various travels around East and North Yorkshire - Mary Ward's own county.

Sr. Frances greeted and waved them goodbye, smoothing out any hiccoughs at the airport and accompanying them around the city of York focusing on York Minster and Margaret Clitherow's
Each evening, Sr. Patricia gave them some invaluable input as to what they would be meeting on their various journeys, with PowerPoint and illustration, and kernels of information.

Sr. Ann, with Kate Morgan’s support, master minded, with her inimitable enthusiasm, their coach trips:

- to Osbaldwick where they met the wonderful vicar Andrew Clements, seeing for the first time Mary Ward's stone and the place where her funeral took place. From there they went to Mount Grace to follow in Mary Ward and her companion’s footsteps in the 1640s.

- to the East Riding beginning with Osgodby Hall where Mary Ward first heard of religious life, to Hemingborough Church where the Babthorpe family were patrons, to Babthorpe Hall. They then visited Ploughlands where Mary Ward lived with her grandmother, seeing Welwick Church where her family were buried, and the magnificent St. Patrick’s Church at Patrington having had their picnic by the sea near Spurn Point.

- to the North Riding - to Mary Ward's birth place at Mulwith, the cousins' home at Ripley Castle with the indomitable Margaret Jowett acting out the Mary Ward story in secret times, the place of the family's Baptism Font in Ripon Cathedral and the surrounding countryside including Harewell Hall where she made her First Communion.

The Community enjoyed their company at meals and especially on the last evening when all joined together to feast in Indian singing and dancing in the Atrium in the Bar Convent. Another very special time was spent with the elderly frail sisters at St. Joseph's where they all came away marveling at their interest and care.

The Community in York all rejoice that they came and sincerely hope that they will be able to take back the fruit of those experiences and share them with their five Provinces/Regions - Delhi, Allahabad, Nepal, Patna and Bangalore. As one of the Mary Ward Associates commented on their return from Mulwith and Ripon – “to network across their Provinces would be networking indeed.”
War in the Mediterranean!
Magdalena Winghofer CJ - MEP

From 10-14 February I was able to take part as CJ representative in the contact-seminar ‘Option for the Poor’ in the Catholic University of Münster. There were about 50 people taking part, particularly students and religious involved in social justice. This year the subject was Refugees.

As an introduction Auxiliary Bishop Geerlings, Vice-President of the Migration Commission of the German Bishops’ Conference, spoke on: ‘Our founding document, the Bible, can only be understood against the background of flight, exile, expulsion and travelling.’ Today, also, there has for a long time been flight and migration not only from Africa to Europe, but also to a much greater extent within Africa or, for example, from Syria to the neighbouring countries. That puts a question-mark over the talk of refugees ‘streaming’ towards Europe – an expression which easily provokes the ‘sandbags against floods’ reaction.

And that is exactly what refugees experience at the European frontiers. With the setting up of the Schengen Area the frontiers are more controlled, and over the last few years progressively sealed off. FRONTEX, the border control agency, has been accused of a breach of human rights. There are huge fences, walls and camps to prevent people completely from leaving the African continent. This binds up money for development aid with migration-policy. Since last December stronger guarding of borders by means of drones etc. has been established, under the name EURO-SUR. The extensive exhibition of European border defences leaves the impression that ‘Europe wages war’.

All the same, numbers of people go on trying to reach Europe. They are fleeing from war and violence, they are fleeing from natural disasters and, as a result of climate-change, from scarcity of drinking-water, because of desertification. And they are fleeing, because in their own countries they lack the basic conditions for a life fit for human beings. European politics and business, and our lifestyle, share responsibility for this. An example is where Coltan, and other raw-materials needed for mobile phones and laptops, are mined under inhuman conditions, child-labour, and war in the Congo, because that is the cheapest way to access it.

Many discussions in the course of the seminar were marked by considerations on how to become aware of our own responsibility and review our lifestyle, inform ourselves and organize ourselves politically. For those who think of themselves as democratic members of a democratic society cannot say that what elected politicians do in their name is not their concern.

Two challenges from Pope Francis were the focus for the closing work on his document ‘Evangelii Gaudium’: ‘Breaking out of our comfort-zones’, and ‘each one must becoming a little poorer’.

I am grateful for this new knowledge, for encouragement and sharing, for open questions, and the thorn in the flesh that stays with me – as Pope Francis puts it: ‘No one must say that they cannot be close to the poor because their own lifestyle demands more attention to other areas. This is an excuse commonly heard in academic, business or professional, and even ecclesial circles.’ (Evangelii Gaudium 2011)
Justice - Issue based campaign -
Report by Amalia CJ Patna -
Social Action Centre, Chirag

Kususm, the lady from the village who works with us had applied for money for the construction of her house through Indira Awaz Yogana (a government scheme for housing) from the Block. She received the first installment of rupees 30,000 which she utilized. The report and photograph was submitted and the second installment of Rs. 15000 was also sanctioned. After waiting for almost three months, all that she received was Rs. 3500 into her bank account which was supposed to be for the toilet construction.

On inquiring about it she was told that all the money was sanctioned and her record is cleared. The poor lady was made to walk in and out of the block office for many days. Finally she reported the case to us. Sr. Poonam Palliparambil was determined to fight for justice. She made all possible inquiries and finally prevailed upon the Block Office and got hold of the record register. She saw it was all a mixed up affair.

The name was Kusum’s but the photograph was of someone else. The amount was cancelled and written ‘cleared’ against her name. She asked for the block Officer and was told that he was transferred. Sr. Poonam decided to go to the ‘Janata Darbar’ (The public Grievance Cell) She instructed Kusum how to present her case before the District Magistrate). Accordingly Kusum wept and bemoaned the injustice done to her by the block office. As the case was brought by Sr. Poonam, the DM promised quick action against her case. Within a week’s time, the whole amount was transferred into her account. Before the money was released into her account, few people from the village who are petty officers in the Block Office came to help Kusum for the speedy release of the money but for a sum as commission.

They took away her pass book. Sr. Poonam had to intervene here too. She gave no peace to Kusum till she recovered the pass book. Finally, with all her determination against bribe, Sr. Poonam helped Kusum to withdraw the money from the bank. Kusum brought the money to Chirag and placed it on the altar and thanked the Lord before taking it home. She has completed the construction of her house now.

This incident helped us to realize that getting into JPIC issue based campaign is a new and appropriate way of Social Action.

Thank you very much for the news items for this edition. Please send in news for the next edition to reach the editor by **20th November, at the latest**.

Please could I request you to keep the size of the text to one side of A4 and kindly send the photos separately in jpeg format.