

## Celebrating 50 Years in Brazil

*From HAM radio to Skype..communications have certainly changed in our 50 years in Brazil! Sister Maureen Finn brings us this perspective on “keeping in touch” as we continue to commemorate the mission’s golden anniversary.*

One of the most noticeable changes in our lives here is in the area of communications. I wasn't here in the first 20 years of our Brazil mission but I lived without telephone in our house for my first 15 years here. I am struck when I remember .... how Sister Chris Burgmaier got news of here two sisters dying in a car accident by way of ham radio and someone who drove from another town to tell her. Or when Sister Sue Wills lived in a very remote area with Indigenous people and got the message that her mother had died. She got on the bus to get to Goiania and when passing through Cuiabá (the State capitol) she discovered it was her father and not her mother who had died. Sister Katherine was in São Paulo and had received the message that Sue had died!



I remember Sister Jean Bellini spending hours in the telephone station where there was one phone line serving the mayor's office, the bank and the entire town. She would finally get her turn to use the phone and have to scream to be heard by the person she was calling, so of course she was heard by everyone else also!

I got a message from the state capitol, via a boy on a bike from the mayor's office, telling me to get to Cuiabá and appear on December 1<sup>st</sup> 1995 for my swearing in as a Brazilian citizen. The bus trip took more than 24 hours, so I had already left when the judge sent another message not to come, he was out on strike. I was already on route! When I got there the Judge had decided hold the ceremony, knowing my difficulties in getting there.

Without a phone all our contacts in the town were done by visits, walking or by bike to talk with someone, give a message and do our daily work. One didn't call ahead to see if someone would be home so people dropped whatever they were doing to receive your visit, knowing the effort it took to come.

Finally, in the first years in Brazil we got letters by the post office, slow but most did arrive. Now, with Skype, Oovoo, telephones in each house, cell phones, TV, internet, we can keep in touch in many new ways.

A few months ago we were using a booklet in our neighborhood reflections groups that we prepared to help our people celebrate with us the spirit and spirituality of our Congregation as part of our Celebration of 50 Years in Brazil. A youth loved the Maxims and during each gathering she had it on her Facebook before the evening was over! A few days later she told me 17 people had commented to her about her post. What a new world we live in!