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Meeting with the Teams of Participation



ROME 22-28 JUNE 2015

PARTICIPANTS – TEAMS OF PARTICIPATION

GENERAL COUNCIL

Ana Maria ALCALDE	Superior General
Bernadette TAURINYA	Vicar Contemplatives
Kumudinie DASSANAYAKE	Assistant General
Micheline KENDA	General Councillor
Eithne HUGHES	General Councillor
Geni DOS SANTOS	General Councillor
Marian MURCIA	General Bursar

ROOTS Charism-Spirituality

Claire McGRATH	Britain & Ireland
Perpétue MUMPANGA	R. D. Congo
M. Zulema FRANK	Argentina
Dammika FERNANDO	Sri Lanka
Clare FERNANDO	Argentina
Margaret MULDOON	Britain & Ireland

Vocation of GOD ALONE

Áine HAYDE	Britain & Ireland
Colleen MOORE	South Africa
Síle McGOWAN	Britain & Ireland
Mary SLAVEN	France - Martillac

INITIAL FORMATION

Adela FERNÁNDEZ	Brazil
Breda GREHAN	South Africa
Jesmine FERNANDO	Sri Lanka
M. Ewa RÓZYCKA	Poland
M. Adela VANACLOCHA	France - Martillac
Malini JOSEPH	Martillac Vicariate
Pauline MANZUETO	R. D. Congo
Shanthi SIMON	Sri Lanka

ONGOING FORMATION

Geneviève BESSIÈRES	France - Martillac
Mary SLAVEN	France - Martillac
M. Adela VANACLOCHA	France - Martillac

INFORMATION/COMMUNICATION

Maristella Annie ANTHONIPILLAI Rome
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SECRETARIAT

Kinga BARTOS Secretary General



The overall purpose of the meeting was:

- ***To move forward together with a common vision to meet the needs of animation in the Institute, in line with the calls of General Chapter 2014***
- ***To apply the above, according to the specific field of each particular team***



DAY ONE - 22 June

At 4 pm all the participants were in the conference room of our Generalate in Rome. They began to settle, to welcome each other or to get to know one another and received some practical information from Kinga.

Ana Maria ALCALDE, the Superior General welcomed all present. She underlined that this was a great opportunity, an international and intercultural experience. In order to overcome the language barrier we need to enter into deeper and more interactive relations with each other. We need to move towards each other. “Let us go over to the other side” as Jesus said to His disciples (Mark 4, 35).

At this point all the Sisters were asked to talk about themselves in small groups to deepen their mutual knowledge. After this they shared, in small groups, their expectations and desires with regard to this meeting. In the end they met briefly in their teams of participation and shared the feelings accompanying them when they first became part of their group.

OPENING RITUAL

In the context of the Year of Consecrated Life and one year after our General Chapter, the prayer started with giving thanks for the past. The assembly remembered with gratitude all the Sisters who preceded us. All sang “I am standing on the Shoulders of the ones who came before me” a song by Joyce Johnson Rouse. The singing was accompanied by a touching slide show representing Sisters who came before and those who are with us today.

After an exhortation to live the present with passion, each participant was given a small piece of puzzle to write her name on. Then each team was invited to bring their parts of the jigsaw puzzle that together formed a picture. This was symbolising how we all are small parts of one big picture. Each one is essential in order to complete the whole.



The prayer ended with a call to embrace the future with hope remembering that “we cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing this. This enables us to do something and to do it very well.”

DAY TWO - 23 June

On the morning of the second day the participants were invited to join Jesus on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus requires the contribution of his disciples to feed the crowd. After reading the words from John 6, 1-13 there was a moment of silence where each Sister was to ask herself:

“What do I bring? What can I give to Jesus who needs my contribution? What are my 2 fish, my 5 bread...?”

The Sisters were asked to name their fish and their bread, write down on a fish cut out of paper and put it in the basket.



OPENING OF THE MEETING OF THE TEAMS OF PARTICIPATION



At the beginning of her opening speech Ana Maria gave a preamble pointing out that we are all children of light. Light is something we all have in abundance. Our light can be used in two different ways; in can enlighten or blind the other person. When we are blinded our reaction is to close our eyes, look away or to put on sunglasses. We all have light, what is different is the perspective, the viewpoint. Even this room seen from different positions where we sit, presents different aspects. It is only when we share what we see that we have a full vision. We need to keep this in mind during this meeting.

Here are some most significant paragraphs from Ana Maria’s speech:

“Each one of you has received a gift: use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” (1Pet 4:10) We can ask ourselves the question, “What is my gift and how can I develop and share it? The most wonderful thing about this gift of God is that the more we share it, the more it is

ours, and the best way to develop it is to give it away endlessly. Then, not only will we be able to enjoy our own gift but we will increase it by sharing it with others; and we will enjoy the fruits of others’ gifts as if they were our own.” (Document on Consecrated Life No. 42) We can think of

this not only at the level of our own personal gift but also at the level of the gift that we have received collectively as a Family – our Charism of Communion – whose vitality will grow as we share it.

The Chapter challenges us to go forward so that *“our way of living leadership for mission may be integrated and prophetic”* (General Chapter 2014 – Our Corporate Commitment). By “integrated leadership”, we understand **collaborative leadership**. “At the present time, collaborative leadership is developing into “connected leadership” in a network, in response to the great changes which are taking place in the world in this “age of connectivity”.

Each Team, even though it deals with a particular area, will be contributing to the transformation of the “body” which we form. Our Teams are interconnected and so we must be aware that our contribution is related to and affects the whole. We need a global mind-set and must broaden our horizons to seek ideas which will open us up to a field of vision towards the future for the good of the mission.

By **prophetic leadership** we understand a leadership that is based on faith and the word of God, and is exercised as a service in which discernment is the normal decision-making process in view of social, institutional, community and personal transformation.

This kind of leadership requires an attitude of “exodus” (conversion) which moves away from what we have learned towards

the “unlearning” of forms and modes of leadership at all levels – not looking at everything from our own point of view (self-reference) but looking towards ourselves from the margins. If we are able to displace ourselves in this way (even though it will destabilise us) we will be able to re-read the Charism in the light of the new signs of the times; this will give it a new gospel and prophetic dimension and we will be able to find energy for the mission in it. What could be more prophetic than collaborating with God’s mission so that the “sacred community of life”, which we are, can become a reality in our time?

We must remember that we will be tempted not to allow ourselves to be disturbed. But if we take a quick look over the last seven years we will see that world and church scenarios are completely different now, and that changes have been taking place in our Family also.

I will end with a story. We are told that when they were having a meal together, Einstein spoke to Carl Jung about the amazing amount of energy that is contained in the atom. That led the psychiatrist to wonder if there could be an equivalent amount of hidden energy in the human psyche. Science has confirmed that this is so. Within each one of us there is a powerful well of energy connected by hidden channels to the energy in all the other beings in the universe, creating life and communion with EVERYTHING.”

After a time of reflection and sharing in small groups, some questions and comments based on Ana Maria’s talk were raised in the assembly. We report here the most recurring ones:

- To live Exodus we need to get out from our viewpoints. How do people on the margins see reality? Can we adopt their point of view?
- Openness to what is new, discerning the signs of the times
- We need to be more interested, more in touch with what is going on in other Units. We are comfortable in our communities and often don’t bother to be really concerned by the news that arrives from other parts of the Institute

- We must allow ourselves to be disturbed, overcome the tendency to stick to our viewpoints. We need more dialogue, trust and openness to move forward.
- We must be ready to dare, not only to maintain what is already there.
- Collaborative leadership implies co-responsibility as members.
- We need to empty ourselves, begin to listen and let others enrich us.
- Words need to come to life, not remain just words. Do we really dare?
- Importance of unlearning – we often take things for granted and think that they are as we see them. This is a major challenge.
- Each of us has received a gift that we must not keep to ourselves but share with others so we can see it multiplied.
- The joy of being interconnected with all.

Kumudini explained the meaning of the logo. The **FIRE** represents our passion for God’s own mission – God’s love for the world, which urges us to be open and listen to our reality (**GLOBAL**) “through which God speaks to us, which inspires and energises us” calling us to a changed way of seeing, hearing, speaking and engaging. This is our common mission. At the Chapter we realized that the reality of this world, where everyone and everything is “on the move”, urges us to be **OUTWARD LOOKING**, to commit ourselves to live in a state of **EXODUS** – to “be with”, to live and offer our gift of communion.



Being aware that our journey is from one Chapter to another, after a break, we connected ourselves with the experience of our General Chapter 2014 through a slide show commemorating the most significant moments. After the slide show the Sisters were asked to reflect on the following:

- *What touched you in the PowerPoint presentation?*
- *What was your most powerful experience at the Chapter?*

Here are some reflexions of the participants:

- What touched me and gave a lot of confidence during the Chapter were the discernment groups. I felt that things were going in the right direction and that the Holy Spirit was at work.
- What touched me most was the experience of prayer at the Chapter, especially the opening prayer
- The great energy and movement as we were getting to know each other was what impressed me most; a great interior dynamism. This was also included in the question “If we don’t dare now, than when?”

- The most powerful experience was when we were working on the documents for the following 6 years, an awareness of what was being built. What do I dare to do more so that this General Chapter becomes alive?

Geni invited the Assembly to reread the Chapter documents: Vowed for Mission and the Corporate Commitment. The aim was to choose the main calls to focus on during the coming years; paying attention to areas which need deepening and to energize so as to move forward. Time was set for personal reflection, reflection in language groups and assembly sharing. Each Sister would name and note down 3 calls and share them in groups. We report some of the results of group work:

- Discernment, action, reflection
- From patriarchal structure to inclusive, participative leadership and responsible membership
- Going towards a unified, dynamic, connected world view
- Change of perspective, change of our worldview which includes our understanding of God and creation
- God Alone, yes to life
- Be women of hope
- Deep listening for transformation and moving into action
- Be prepared to trust chaos, to live with what is incomplete
- Free the energies of the origins, exploit our inter-vocational heritage
- Awakening of consciousness as part of the earth community
- Exodus out of ourselves, change of mindset, getting rid of our fixed ideas, fixed mentality
- Prophetic leadership

A time was set for questions and clarifications in the assembly. What emerged above all was the desire for change. There is some discontentment at the present moment and we must look for new ways of listening, seeing, understanding to realise the change we wish to bring about. We are aware that we haven't arrived. We are on the way; we have a journey to travel. When we talk about change we must not think of arriving to a new stable place. We are in a process and will always be. We must learn to trust chaos and to live with what is incomplete, with things that are constantly evolving. We must be open.

After a break, Eithne invited all the present to reflect on the experience of EXODUS, in the light of what has just emerged from the group work. The participants were given 3 selected texts regarding exodus: a Biblical/Christian perspective and an extract from *Evangelii Gaudium*. Again, time was set for personal reading, reflection in language groups and assembly sharing. In late afternoon, teams shared on the important points to focus on, through the work of Teams during the coming years. Here are some of them:

- Exodus understood as movement towards a change that requires courage to change
- The call to passion for the mission of Jesus, in particular towards the poor
- A strong call for change but we cannot change just for the sake of a change. We must ask ourselves why we want to change. We must follow the interior call for conversion and change of mentality. This requires daring and risking new ways of being.
- Ours is a "journey faith", not "lab faith". We don't need unruly activism.

- Importance of Pope's words: "True love is always contemplative..."
- Lack of dualistic thinking. The left and the right are kept together.
- The exodus is an archetype of our interior journey.
- Groups underlined the expression: "there's no authentic God experience that does not situate you in the world." We must place ourselves in the world, especially with the poor. We must live in solidarity with those who have no power, change our way of thinking, our mindsets. We must remember that we live ourselves to a new way of thinking, not think ourselves to a new way of living. Very often, even when we are with the poor, we want to be powerful and on top of ourselves.
- The theme of fear was raised by several groups. We need to conquer our fears. There's nothing more paralyzing than fear. In fact in the Bible, God's exhortation "do not be afraid" is recurrent. We must encourage one another to share our fears, help each other to resolve our doubts, accompany one another.

DAY THREE - 24 June

In the morning most of the participants went to the papal audience. The assembly gathered again in the afternoon. The Sisters were to evaluate the experience of work done by Teams of Participation during the past six years. In language groups they were to share on two questions:

1. *What impact has the work done by the international teams of participation made on you and your context?*
2. *What do you think was missing and would like to bring in/change/improve?*



We report here the evaluation of each Team of Participation done by language groups for question 1 and question 2:

ONGOING FORMATION TEAM

1. The work of this Team in was described as very good. The sessions proposed in Martillac are enriching and much appreciated by all the Sisters participating in them. Sisters profit greatly from what they receive in Martillac and this can be seen thanks to their sharing with communities after they come back. The sessions and themes are well prepared; they offer an integrated new vision of the world and a new outlook on the Consecrated Life. There is great diversity and unity in Martillac. Sisters come back enthusiastic.
2. At the same time ongoing formation in units must be better organised and must be combined with initial formation. It would be good to have ongoing formation teams in all the units, to have a network of teams with common vision.
It often happens that young Sisters, after training, come back very enthusiastic but then they clash with the older Sisters who have a different vision and this can be very frustrating.
It would be helpful to receive a feedback from Sisters after their ongoing and also basic formation experiences.

INITIAL FORMATION TEAM

1. There are many programs to make the Sisters aware of the necessity for a change of mindset and attitude. More space is given to contemplative prayer. Young Sisters participate more and more in the struggles of the poor, they take part in protest marches and other concrete activities, they stand with the people. They also meet more often; in Asia, for example, there has recently been a meeting of young Sisters. The international team has done a lot of work, especially with regards to discernment evaluation guidelines. The tools for discernment, accompaniment and evaluation are very helpful, life giving and have a great impact on the work of Sisters.
2. The necessity of connection of this Team with the Team of Ongoing Formation was underlined. Such connection is very important and must be developed.

INFORMATION/COMMUNICATION TEAM

1. The participants were happy about the speed of information and the development of social media, blogs, flashes and the website. In particular, immediate flashes are very helpful as they allow member to be connected with what is going on in the Family and to be united in prayer. There's a very good flow of information.
The information service helps us to be more open minded, to open our eyes to what is happening in the world. Facebook is very useful here as it gives direct, immediate information.
2. The Interconnections arrive a bit late but contain many articles of general interest, which is important. It would be good to put there also articles from each of the Teams of Participation. The Team should encourage the use of Facebook.

ADMINISTRATION OF GOODS TEAM

1. The participants did not have a great deal of information about the activity of this Team but could see its importance: it gives security, helps to reflect on complex question. There has been an international meeting of bursars and a booklet on administration of goods was created but the Sisters did not have access to it.
2. There should be more awareness in treating the domestic goods, more self-sustainability. A formation is needed on how to manage our goods.
Ana Maria explained that administration of goods has become a very complex issue. We need a group of experts that would help us to see the future in terms of resources, personnel etc. This would be a group of lay experts, consultants and Sisters working together. Sisters cannot do all the work as they do not have adequate formation. In the future they will need the help of professional accountants and consultants.
It is also important to form bursars in the Institute. Bursars have also a role of animation. The idea is to train bursars in Units. We need more Sisters ready to take up the role of unit bursar, invest more in wider formation in Units, look for Sisters who have a gift of administration.
As soon as possible we would like to create such a team but we're not sure when it will be possible.

After the sharing, all the participants received a booklet with a mandate from the General Council containing the reasons of existence of each team, the profile of members and a description of what is expected of them. We report it here below:

The mandate/role/function of the International Teams of Participation

International Initial Formation Team

“A Team that enables a formation that urges and supports new members to live Holy Family apostolic /contemplative vocation with creative fidelity and enthusiasm, in a constantly changing world and within an evolving religious life”.

(GLT report for General Chapter 2014, pg. 14, *adapted*)

The members will be

- Open to the evolution of religious life in today's world, in the light of the emerging world view and the call to 'go out' to those on the margins.
- Capable of reflecting, searching together and working in close collaboration with the formators at local level, to facilitate growth in the young members, with attention to deepening the understanding and the living of:
 - The spirit of God Alone
 - Vowed life for mission
- Capable of stimulating in the young members, passion for mission with the sense of the 'Whole' and of 'being missionary' in a spirit of availability, open to inter-cultural living.



- Capable of working with formators to carry forward, making improvements where necessary and adapting to the context, the guidelines already drawn up in the areas of discernment, accompaniment and evaluation, emphasizing the impact of on-going formation on initial formation.

International On-going Formation Team/community at Martillac

A Team that enhances and supports members to be co-responsible for mission, growing in responsible membership, that 'welcomes and offers the gift of communion with the urgency that this time requires'.

(CC 2014)

The members will

- Open to the newness that the world offers us, provide space and accompaniment for persons to renew their option to live our mission, in the particular situation they are in.
- Enable all to become co-responsible in living membership/leadership with availability and accountability for our mission of communion. (CC 2014, pg. 7)
- Enable a re-reading of the richness of our Charism so as to live our prophetic response as Holy Family consecrated women, in today's world, recognizing this "favourable time" in preparing to celebrate 200 years of our foundation.
- Offer a 'family home' to the different vocations of the Holy Family, with the possibility of renewing their energy for mission.

International Information/Communication Team

"It is necessary to have ongoing communication among us in order to promote Communion through a quality of Presence as Family within the Universe Family."

(Fourth Congress of the Family, 2012, pg. 1)

The members will

- Create greater connectedness among members of the Family, to feel as part of the whole and to be in solidarity with the lived realities in the different contexts (being open to the events of the world, Church and Family) and calling for responses.
- Coordinate information received from different parts of the Holy Family world.
- Revitalize the network of communication with and among the Information Teams of the Units and all the members of the Institute/Family.
- Make use of the new communication media to be more effective and connected to the larger world (eg. Face book)

International Team (for deepening our roots) / (energizing for mission)

"The awareness of the emerging world view connects deeply with our Charism, convincing us of its prophetic strength for our world today."

(Vowed for mission, pg. 2)

“The Chapter urges us to return to our roots, to drink from the wellsprings of our spirituality; to give new impetus to the spirit of God alone as it was lived by Jesus, Mary and Joseph. It is here that we find energy and impetus for mission.”

(Post Capitular Circular, June 2014, pg. 4)

The members will

- Research, study and reflect on Holy Family Charism and Spirituality, re-reading them in the light of the emerging world view and being urged by the vision/dream of the Founder.
- Animate and enable all members of the Institute/Family to imbibe, be renewed and nourished by this new impetus so as to commit themselves to live and share the gift of our Charism with enthusiasm and passion.

Team revising the process of discernment for the vocation of God Alone

“Rethink and update the discernment process for the vocation of God Alone” (Gen. Chapter 2014 Recommendations)

- The vocation of God Alone has always been a great source of energy for the whole. This team will work towards a renewed process that is more life giving for the daughters of God Alone, capable of making an impact on the whole.

Team for Administration of goods

NB

- Considering the experience of the past six years, (cf. Report of General Leadership Team to General Chapter 2014) we are in a process of reflecting the effectiveness of this team as it had been so far and searching ways to best respond to the complex reality and the needs in the field of finances in the Institute.

“In a globalized, interconnected world, we are called to live interdependence, strengthening the interrelatedness and sharing among the Units, with humanity and with Earth herself”. (CC 2014, pg. 5)

This team includes sisters as well as some lay persons who are experts/consultants in the field of finances.

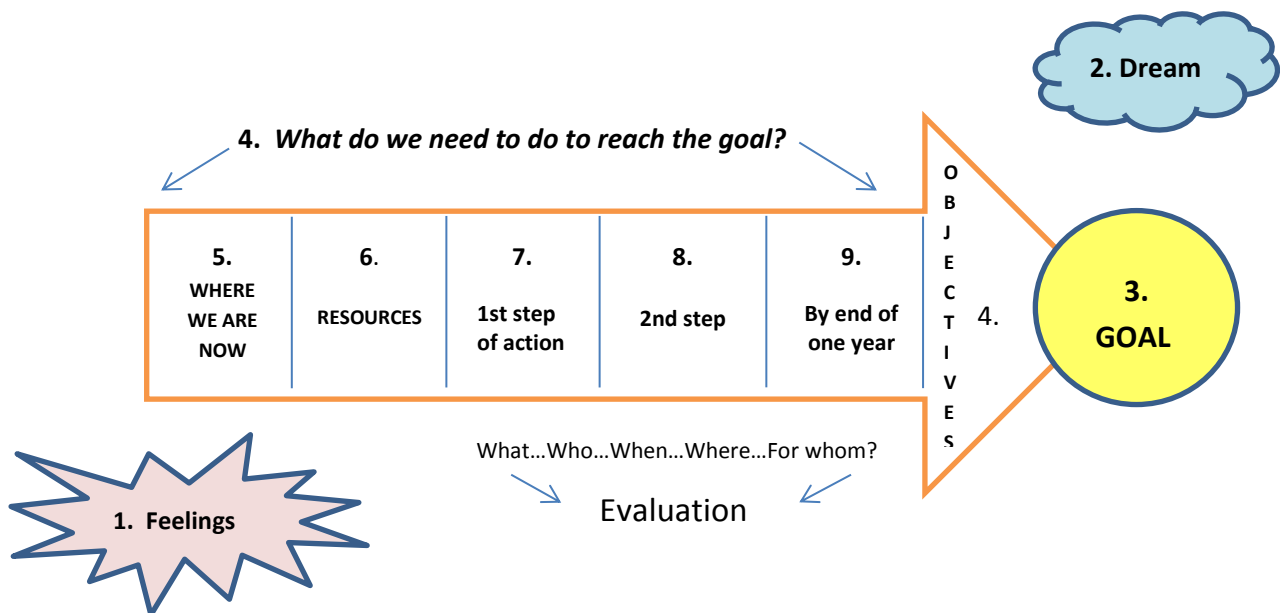
The members will

- Reflect together on pooling and sharing and how we live communion of goods, aware of being in a ‘gift economy’, promoting justice and solidarity.
- Work together discerning ways of managing investments, property, guided by ethical and evangelical criteria and present proposals to the GLT to facilitate decision making towards common good.
- Allow reflecting and working in the Team, to be a means of self- formation for its members.
- Draw up a process for animation and formation of Bursars at various levels and be capable in collaborating in its implementation.

DAYS FOUR to SIX 25 - 27 June

These days were dedicated to individual work of Teams of Participation. On June 25th, during the morning prayer, which was a call to open our hearts to the Holy Spirit that is within us, all the Teams came to light their small candles from the big central candle; we are all interconnected with the light and the spirit of God. After this ritual Micheline explained what the team work would look like in the three following days.

The Participants were given the following scheme to work on:



This tool, that would help the Teams of Participation to reply to the mandate that they have received, comprises 9 major steps; starting from feelings, dreams and objectives that will help to reach the main goal, passing through the examination of the present situation and resources and ending up with concrete steps of action.

DAY SEVEN - 28 June

After three days of work in their Teams all the Participants gathered again in the conference room to share the results of their work and to listen to all the groups. We report here only goals and objectives without presenting the whole action plan of each Team:



VOCATION OF GOD ALONE

GOAL

The Team will seek ways of encouraging and deepening of the spirituality of God Alone. It will work towards a renewed process that is more life giving for the daughters of God Alone, capable of making an impact on the whole.

INITIAL FORMATION

GOAL

In the ongoing process of growth of our Holy Family Contemplative/Apostolic members, we enable them to be open to the unfolding love of God in the Universe and be joyful, faith filled, self-giving women with passion for and commitment to Jesus' mission of 'Oneness'

OBJECTIVES

- Deepen the understanding of religious life in the light of the New Story of the Universe-
- Deepen and promote living of the Spirit of God Alone and 2014 Chapter Directives - Corporate commitment and Vowed Life for mission.
- Stimulate in the young, passion for Jesus' mission and animate for self-giving, availability and the capacity to take risks.
- Ongoing animation for accompaniers and communities to continue the process of growth - conversion - transformation taking into account the guidelines 2012 and the three documents on discernment, accompaniment and evaluation.
- To go forward as a Team together with other members involved in formation to achieve the common Vision, being interconnected and open to the whole Institute.

ROOTS

GOAL

Animate and enable all members of the Institute/Family to imbibe, be renewed and nourished by a new impetus so as to commit themselves to live and share the gift of our Charism with enthusiasm and passion.

OBJECTIVES

- Research, study and reflect on Holy Family Charism and Spirituality, re-reading them in the light of the emerging world view and being urged by the vision/dream of the Founder.
- Reflect on the aspects of our Charism considering the emerging world view. In this process of reflection each member of the Team will:

- engage Sisters in a preliminary conversation on certain aspects of our Charism so that it will be easier for them to link it with what they worked on in community.
- write a common reflection around some aspects of our Charism

INFORMATION/COMMUNICATION

GOAL

Communication through Information is at the service of the Mission of Communion according to the invitation of the Congress of 2012 and the guidelines of the 2014 General Chapter.

OBJECTIVES AND MEANS

1. New Vision, Charism

- Being aware themselves (self-formation of Team members)
- Collaborate with the “Roots Charism and new Vision” team: possibility of being a channel for their material.
- Use the means to share the written materials through videos, You-tube, etc.
- Create a "Reference folder" on the Website with articles, links to websites, and organizations who are working on the same themes, such as the Conference of Canadian Religious.
- Devote a section of the website to the theme of the new vision.

2. Family and Context

- Be aware of the realities of the context where the members of our Family are.
- Generate information through our contacts (members of the Family and those responsible for information in the units.)
- Create a system of email “alerts”.
- Facilitate feedback through letters and comments from readers.

3. Coordination

- Members of the international team work in a network with the Units and contemplative community using the same language.
- Each member of the team is responsible for choosing articles and materials for international publication.
- News/materials for the web to be sent to Annie, and for Facebook to Monika.

4. Revitalize the Network

- We are consumers of information and not the actors. Therefore, we need to build awareness.
- Update the list of those responsible for this service in the institute; establish contacts with the other vocations.
- Take advantage of local and international sessions and meetings to speak of the topic of Information, and also the database on the writings of the Founder.
- Training for members of the international Information team.
- Organize sessions for information at continental level to involve others, and to raise awareness of the importance of information.

5. New means of communication

- Reorganize the webpage
- Each Unit and the Vicariate to create a Facebook page.

You may have noticed that no work is presented here from the **International Team for Ongoing Formation**. Because of commitments with groups in Martillac, only the two members of the Team were able to be present during this second stage of the meeting. The whole team will reflect together in Martillac and share their work at a later date.

After the presentations there was time for questions, clarifications and comments. We report them below:

Questions addressed to the Roots Team:

- One of the Sisters was puzzled by the division of two terms: spirituality and charism. In her opinion charism includes all aspects of our spirituality and mission. The division between spirituality and charism could lead to confusion in our Sisters. The Team replied that yes the term “charism” includes everything but since the Team is only at the beginning, the different parts will let them deepen the whole that is charism. It’s like the threads; they feel the need to divide them in order to put the pattern together again.
- Since the call is to love, seek and desire God alone in imitation of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, are there any plans to update the theme of imitation of the Holy Family and the list of virtues? The Team replied that they didn’t mention virtues because they are not there yet, they will get there as the reflexion develops

Observations addressed to Initial Formation Team:

- There hasn’t been much mention of the contexts from which young people are coming. There should be more examination of the complexity of those contexts (family/culture/faith context). We need to help young people to look at their story, to integrate it, to heal it. The Team replied that this is already happening. The Team gives great importance to rereading life experience, to accompaniment process, to reflection and discernment. Formation always needs to take place in a concrete context.
- A Sister observed that the process of initiation in our Congregation takes too long.
- Formation is a process of giving birth and growing. It is a constant process that never stops. Everything is formation, we must never feel that we’re arrived, we must not be settled.

A concern addressed to the Information Team:

- There was a concern regarding the social media, especially the use of Facebook. Facebook has been used a lot, even by those in Initial Formation and we noticed that people put senseless things on Facebook, just to show off. It would be good to have some kind of formation so that everyone in the Institute uses Facebook in a proper way, as Sisters, people who live according to our Charism

After the Eucharist, there was a short reflection on the Encyclical "Laudato Si". Ana Maria then reminded the group that it had been suggested on the previous day that advantage should be taken of this Meeting to send a message to Pope Francis to thank him for his Encyclical. Ana Maria read the proposed text of the letter; it was accepted unanimously, and signed by all present.

Dear Pope Francis,

We are a group of Apostolic and Contemplative Sisters of the Religious Institute of the Holy Family of Bordeaux, gathered in Rome these days. We belong to the Spiritual Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles; its members also include Consecrated Secular women, and Lay and Priest Associates. We all live the same charism and share the same mission, each according to our specific vocation.

We wish to express our deep appreciation for the Encyclical "Laudato Si".

We welcome with joy the new paradigm it proposes, and pledge to continue to advance, as persons and as communities, towards an "integral ecological conversion" promoting this attitude in others through our apostolic and contemplative lives.

As women, we will take care of our "common home" and we will listen to the cries of the earth as well as to the cries of the poor.

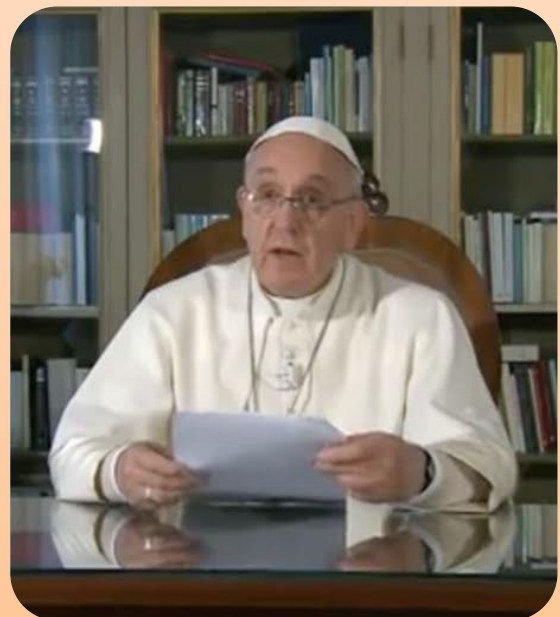
We want our way of life to be marked by communion, interdependence with all creation, compassion, shared sobriety and co-responsibility for everything that lives and exists, in recognition of our common destiny.

Your Encyclical urges us to contemplate "the Holy Family of Nazareth," the model of our Family, and to keep joy and hope alive in the midst of our concerns and our struggles to promote Life.

Thank you for the invitation to bring to maturity the spirituality of communion and solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity.

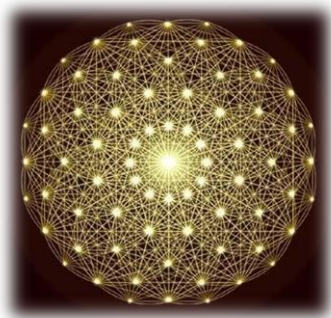
We accompany you with our prayers and heartfelt affection,

(Signed by all present in the Generalate)



In the afternoon, all the Participants gathered in the conference hall for the Closing Ceremony. Ana Maria thanked the Sisters and all those who contributed to this meeting. She said that during the past few days we got to know each other much better and this will help us to have stronger connection within and among our Teams, to give each other more support and to be more communicative. Our Teams must be open, must enrich one another mutually. Ana Maria invited all the Sisters to carry out their service not as a burden but as a life-giving opportunity. If we live our service as a grace, it will become a great joy for us.

The Teams of Participation prepared a symbol representing the essence of their Team.



For the *Initial Formation Team* the symbol was Indra's Net. Indra was the leader of the gods in Vedic times. He lived in a net of jewels where all the jewels were reflected in the other and all were the reflection of God. When any jewel in the net was touched, all the others were affected. This speaks of the hidden interconnectedness and interdependency of everything and everyone in the universe. Like this net of jewels, in the Holy Family, we are a part of the whole, reflect and are reflected in the whole and have an impact on the whole. This is the Oneness Jesus speaks of – the essence of spirituality.

The Team of *Communication/Information* chose light and cables symbolising the light of information spreading from the centre to all the continents and connecting all the members of the Family.

The *Roots* Team brought ribbons and lit a fire symbolising a network that is open, widening and spreading and the fire of passion from which it is generated.



The *Vocation of God Alone* chose water as their symbol. According to the words of our Founder, this vocation is essential to the life and development of the Family. The same is for water that sustains our physical life.

The Meeting ended with a common prayer offering to God projects and action plans the Teams worked on in the past week, which are an expression of a deep desire to reply to His call. "*Send us your Spirit who can alone give birth and accomplish the great transformation.*"



**Holy Family of Bordeaux
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