



# interconnections

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## Connectivity



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**Editors :** Maristella Annie Anthonipillai  
Christine Fene Fene

**Translators :** Aine Hayde (Britain & Ireland)  
Sheila McGowan – (Britain & Ireland)  
Marie Carmen Leach (Spain)

**Web site:** [www.saintefamillebordeaux](http://www.saintefamillebordeaux)

**Facebook:** Sainte-Famille Bordeaux

## EDITORIAL

### CONSCIOUSNESS

These days we talk more about consciousness that is – deeply awakening to the essence of our being, of who we are!

The universal truth is that all things—seen and unseen—are inter-connected. All things are different faces of Consciousness. The Energy Field, the Great Spirit, the Source, an ocean, a river of currents, an infinite field of creative works - all these are names for the same reality.

An ancient story from the East, may be a simple illustration of what consciousness is about.

Two monks argue over a flag waving in the wind. One says 'It's the flag that is moving.' And the other says, 'It's the wind that is moving.' So they put the problem to their teacher.

'You are both wrong,' the teacher says. 'It's only consciousness that is moving.'

Why is it necessary to emphasise on consciousness? Some facts accepted by traditional science will explain this:

Your stomach lining is replaced every four days, your skin every month, your skeleton every three months. At least ninety-eight per cent of the atoms of your body are replaced every year. You have a completely new physical body at least once every two years—including your brain cells. As the energy travels in

you, it picks up bits of earth—food and water—to replace those you expel.

Our essence is not our bodies. We are the energy of consciousness!

Consciousness is evolving, opening out, beginning to get a new sense of kinship among all beings.



The whole universe is structured and organized in such a way that all members depend on one another; in fact a dynamic process of consciousness established exactly by their relation to one another.

We believe that the whole universe is a manifestation of the divine, of God's self-giving Love. And in Jesus, God is incarnated deep in creation. "Because of the Word made flesh, no part of the physical universe is untouched. All is the place of God, all being transformed in Christ." (Vowed for mission 2.4)

Everything is related, and we human beings are all united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love, God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth. (Laudato si 92)

This leads us into a consciousness that the divine indwelling presence is in all and so all that is each living being, is sacred, and is in a dynamic movement of inter-relatedness.

As members of the Family of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, we are gifted with communion - to live and share in. We grow in this awakening consciousness, deepening our connectedness with all humanity, with nature and with the

whole cosmos. We try to focus on rebuilding relationships with all forms of life, living 'Family' - now understood in a broader sense, to include all living beings - and bring life to those who have lost hope – by choosing life at all levels.

### HERE IN ROME



The international Team for the Administration of Goods, gathered together for the first time in the Generalate for two days, from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> October. This team is made of 5 Apostolic sisters, the Vicar of the Contemplatives and two lay persons who are expert financial advisors. Being one of the Teams of Participation, this was their first encounter since the last General Chapter. During the course of this meeting they have discussed about the varied financial situations of the institute, as well the Global financial reality which has an impact on our lives. They also had taken time to plan their future programmes for the coming years - until 2020.



It was a special day (29 Sept, 2017), to all at the General House in Rome. It was the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Ana Maria – a very simple, homely yet significant moment. Gratitude and joy was our profound experience. May God be praised for the many blessings Ana Maria is gifted with, which no doubt flow to and enrich all members of the Holy Family!

“Communicating the Mission” - a course on ‘Communication for Religious’ was organized by the UISG (International Union for Superiors General) on 27<sup>th</sup>& 28<sup>th</sup> October in their Headquarters, in Rome. Many experts provided us with treasured material. This was a great opportunity to promote positive energy to handle the challenges we face in communication service. This was also a platform to come to know different women religious and to interact with them. Many facts were shared in preparation for developing communication material, managing media access and the flow of information. I was privileged and happy to take part in this.

*Annie Anthonipillai*



## PEACE WALK

John Mpaliza was born in Bukavu, in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He is a software engineer. He is forty five years of age and has been in Italy for the past twenty one years.

Until May 2014, he worked as a programmer in the municipality of Reggio Emilia, in the north of Italy. He decided to leave his work for a much more important reason than personal fulfilment and earning a salary. He set out to walk for peace, especially in the DR Congo, but also in the world. He became the ‘Peace Walking Man’.

John is an energetic activist with very ambitious aims. He knows that “walking for peace” will bring physical, psychological and moral suffering, not to mention the heat, cold, rain and snow. It is very important for him to keep on walking even if he has no money or is tired because he has to reach his



destination. As he goes along he meets people who like to hear his message of peace. He travels 35/45 km each day.

### **Why does he do it?**

John wants to conscientise people about peace. He says, “I began to conscientise people about the traumatic situation of the Congolese people. Their country is very rich but they are dying of poverty”. Congo-Kinshasa is a country rich in fresh water, fertile land and biodiversity. It is so rich in gold, cobalt, anything about it. I did not want to be part of this death-dealing silence. Other African countries also have the same problems caused by the tyranny and exploitation of multinationals and industrialised countries, often in collusion with local leaders whom they have chosen and imposed on the people. I think that walking and speaking about the daily problems of these countries as well as of my own country helps people to see how unjustly they are treated and gives hope that Congo, and Africa in general, will experience a new dawn tomorrow”.

John walks quietly and joyfully. He says, “I like to think that my way of bringing the message of peace to the people I meet on my journey shows them that, in spite of all the corruption, wars, famine and injustice which we experience every day, the world is not doomed. I am convinced that the search for peace will lead to a socially just world”.

It is four years since John began to walk for peace in the DR Congo and in the whole world. He keeps going by thinking of the thousands of people who are suffering in his own country and

diamonds, tin, etc. that it could almost be called scandalous.

The lack of media interest in the DR Congo drove John to set out walking in order to conscientise the media, investors and politicians too. After visiting the country in 2009, John exclaimed, “I was devastated by what I saw and heard and I decided I could no longer be silent. I lost several relatives during the wars. Eight million Congolese died, about four million women suffered violence and nobody was doing throughout the world. His walking is the result of his own personal suffering, the suffering of a people and the lack of democracy.



Over the course of a month in 2016, John walked from Italy, (Reggio Emilia, where he lives) to Belgium (Brussels) to denounce the EU for the massacre in Beni (East Congo) especially and the alarming situation in the whole of the DR Congo in general.

From 1 to 29 October this year, John Mpaliza walked from Reggio Emilia (in the north of Italy) to Rome to let the world know that the situation in the DR Congo is getting worse. During the last week of this walk (23 – 29 October), he organised a lot of things to give information about Congo – conferences, sharing of experiences etc. – while still

continuing to walk. These activities were always open to all people of goodwill.

I took part in two of the events: First of all, the walk on Friday, 27 October when we walked from Piazza del Popolo to the entrance of St. Peter's Square. For security reasons and the safety of the group, we were accompanied by the Italian Police. As we walked, we sang national songs in several of the languages of our country to express our sympathy for the people. I was reminded of Psalm 136, "By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept when we remembered Sion". We were accompanied by a guitar as we walked and sang.

On Sunday, the last day of the programme, I went with the group to St. Peter's Square for the Angelus. John wanted us to tell the world and the



Church about the urgency of finding a rapid solution to the Congolese crisis by means of flags of the DR Congo and armbands on which were written "Peace – Pace".

Dear sisters and brothers, please pray for the alarming situation in the DR Congo. On 23 of this month at 17.30, in St. Peter's Basilica, the Pope will pray for South Sudan and the DR Congo.

*Marie-Pierre*

*Local Community, the Generalate.*

## Accompanying residents of EYRE POWELL HOTEL

Direct Provision Centre in Newbridge - Britain & Ireland:



In October 2016, a group from Newbridge Parish Community, led by *Holy Family* Sister Eileen Murphy, began linking with Asylum seekers who live in the Eyre Powell Hotel, a Direct Provision Centre, in Newbridge. Over 70 people, including about 10 children, are accommodated there. They come from

15 countries on 4 continents, and widely different worlds, bringing with them their own; History, Language, cultures and customs.

They come from a variety of educational backgrounds and life experiences. Among them, there are:

- Painters
- Nurses
- Photographers
- Bakers
- Electricians
- Teachers
- Students

One can only imagine the rich contribution they could make to Irish society. Adults in DP receive a weekly cash allowance of €21.60. They are not allowed to work - as already stated - or go to higher education. They are provided with three meals a day but are not allowed to cook their own meals, though changes in this regard are being introduced in some centres.

They share a room and keep all their belongings in one cupboard. They don't know whether they will be there months or years. It began in October 2016 when residents were invited to a coffee morning in the Parish Centre. Since then, on the first Friday of every month a group of parishioners and asylum seekers meet for coffee and a chat in the Parish Centre.

*Eileen Murphy, Newbridge, Ireland.*

## A Wave of Green for Sri Lanka



The Holy Family College of Malaga held a variety of educational, conscientisation and fund-raising activities during the second week of May for the Bicentennial Humanitarian Project in Sri Lanka.

The participation of the pupils and their families as well as the involvement of the teachers was wonderful. Love for a *Holy Family Project* was obvious even though the college passed into the hands of the Educational Foundation of St. Dominic this year.

The teachers and pupils developed their interest in the Project by getting to know the situation of the country over the past few years by means of a letter from the Provincial of Jaffna. They also read the testimonies of some of the young people involved in the project, "Young people for a

changing world". Many were shocked by the harsh reality of everyday life in that country.

All the pupils of the three school levels were involved in decorating the college. Each one cut out the silhouette of a shirt on paper and wrote a message on it. These were hung up all over the college as a constant reminder that we were united with Sri Lanka working for the improvement of their living conditions.

That same week, Fr. José Luis Cacho, a Passionist Missionary who has spent many years on the missions, came to speak to us. He helped us to realise the harsh reality of millions of people's lives and to be aware of the value of the things which we have in our own lives.

Financially speaking, the great success of our campaign was the sale of almost 600 T-shirts for Sri Lanka. Our pupils wore these with pride in the streets around the college. Since they were brightly coloured and bore the Bicentennial logo, the people called them "The wave of green for Sri Lanka".

Different activities were organised on different days. The second-level pupils held a sports day and showed a film. Another day, they sold French-style pancakes. All

the money from these activities went to the Humanitarian Project.

Tombola was organised with the children from the infant and primary levels. They enjoyed this very much and collected quite a sum of money for the project.

We know that our basic task as a college is to educate and conscientise the new generations in values such as justice, solidarity and equality. But, as well as that, on a financial level, we wanted to bring our little grain of sand to the Project of the Family of Pierre Bienvenu. We collected almost €4.000 from the various activities as a result of the efforts and work of many people. This gives even more meaning to our work of education and evangelisation.



*Manuel Plaza, Teacher at the Centre*

## WE WANT A CLEAN TOWN, SO WE WENT INTO ACTION



The group Eco Namasté Quitilipi laid out a plan of action to introduce the topic of managing waste and caring for the environment so that we could have a clean town.

“We want to have a clean town”, was one of the things that was said at a meeting organised by members of the ecological group Eco Namasté Quitilipi. The group is trying to conscientise the community about

the management of urban waste and the care of the environment.

After the workshop which took place in the San Martín cultural centre some days later and which was attended by the environmental manager responsible for the solid waste plant of Machagai Rolando Sena, Eco Namasté decided to begin a door-to-door campaign and speak to the residents.

Some students who were interested in the topic did a programme on the radio of San José Obrero. Then the people were told how to identify different types of waste and to separate them so as to develop habits of hygiene and cleanliness. They also received information leaflets.

When the publicity had been done in this region, they tried to put it into practice and asked the municipality to bring the waste to the plant in Machagai until the plant in Quitilipi could be repaired. And so the campaign spread to other areas.



We need the authorities to take this on as a real commitment.

While that was going on, the ecological group petitioned the municipality to get the solid waste plant put back into working order and to set up publicity campaigns.

It was clear that, for this type of action, we needed to network and that the authorities must take on their responsibility and make dealing with the problem of rubbish a priority.

During the meeting it was clear that there is more to ecology and care for the environment than just planting trees. Also, in these matters, we need the commitment of residents, teachers and, especially, the authorities.

ECO NAMASTE began a conscientisation campaign in the neighbourhood of San José Obrero.

Members of the ecological group began the operation "For a clean Town" in San José Obrero. Five groups of young people along with members of ECO Namasté Quitilipi



began going from house to house with the prior consent of the residents.

They launched this programme on the radio, saying where they would be visiting. During their visits, they would try to convince the residents to be hygienic in their homes, to separate domestic waste and to care for the environment for the good of the whole population.

During the visits, some young people from the *Holy Family* Hostel, along with the ecologists, explained to the residents that they were encouraging people to separate their domestic waste. They gave a brief explanation about how long it takes for some items to degrade. They distributed information leaflets and encouraged people to keep the gutters clean by not throwing plastic bottles and such things into them. Gradually, this would make an impact on the neighbourhood project. The first time round, the people were reasonably agreeable to the idea of separating domestic waste. Several times, the group was asked, "What will we do with the waste?" "Where will we bring it?" – Questions to which there are no answers.

We are going to petition the authorities about what to do with separated domestic rubbish. The leaders of each group stated their intention of insisting on the imperative need, to open the plant for treating urban solid waste. We know how important this is from what the residents said.

In other cases, we noted that some residents were unaware that there was a problem with rubbish. The opposite occurred in other homes where the residents were very aware. They congratulated the group on their initiative and were ready to join the petition to open the plant as soon as possible to alleviate the problem of waste.

(Taken from the link below):

<http://quitilipi.com.ar/eco-namaste-comenzo-la-campana-conciencion-barrio-san-jose-obrero/>

## 7th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF LA VÍA CAMPESINA<sup>1</sup>



The 7th International Conference of la Vía Campesina was held in Derio, Basque Country, Spain from 16 to 24 July this year.

La Vía Campesina is an international social movement made up of over 200 million peasants, small-scale farmers, landless people, farmworkers, Indigenous Peoples, small and medium

size producers, fishermen, shepherds and migrants from all over the world.

This Organisation is made up of 164 organisations in 73 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and America. Its aim is to defend small-scale sustainable agriculture so as to promote social and economic justice, to cool the planet and to defend a dignified life for rural peoples. It challenges agribusinesses, multinationals and economic policies which are destroying peoples and nature.

This event was attended by more than 500 representatives of peasants from all over the world. The slogan of the Conference was: “We Feed our People and Build the Movement to Change the World”

The priorities of la Vía Campesina are:

- Defending the earth, forests, water, seeds
- Fighting against the monopolisation of land, the repression of peasants and violence against them
- Highlighting the role of women and generational change.

“It’s struggles for the land and for agrarian reform are the most important in the whole world. If the States do not make policies that place nature at the service of peoples and prevent the big multinationals from taking over land to set up food businesses, we will not be able to achieve Food Sovereignty. The struggle for comprehensive agrarian reform is one of the most important struggles taking place today in the different continents and it will therefore have a central place in our 7<sup>th</sup> Conference”.



<sup>1</sup> La Vía Campesina (LVC) is known internationally by its Spanish title. Translator’s note.

Several *Holy Family* Sisters were able to take part in the open meetings of this event which takes place every four years in a different country.

From the opening of the Conference, an atmosphere of solidarity, equality and spirituality was created which drew us together and made us feel that we were sisters and brothers.

The welcome given to each group with its own particular characteristics and typical dress gave warmth and colour to the meeting.

The host group presented the Basque way of life by means of symbols, folklore, sport etc. The Round Table gave us some understanding of the complexity of the debate by means of the history of the various movements and the reasons for which they were set up. The Conference closed with a gathering in the centre of Bilbao, a march through the streets and a lovely celebration in the Plaza Nueva.

*Carmen Garca de Eulate, Community of Florida de Liébana*

## **A SMALL STEP FOR LIFE**

**This article has already appeared in the magazine “*Seguimos en contacto*”. We have reproduced it here because we think it should have as wide a readership as possible. Sometimes we are not aware of our power, as consumers, to influence the decisions of big companies.**

**We need also to be more aware that our faith and lifestyle can make a concerted impact on the environment.**

We have taken a small step which is described very well in the second call of the 2015 Assembly. It says that we want **“to be alert to recognise the causes of any injustice which damages life and destroys the Earth and to discern support and journey with others in our efforts to promote life”**.

We had spent months looking at the possibility of leaving the multinational electricity company, *Iberdrola*. This year, we also took part in events organised by groups such as “*anti-nuclear Salamanca*” and “*Stop the uranium mine*”, to work against a multinational mining project which is being encouraged by the government.

## **URANIUM MINING IN SALAMANCA**

### **A TOWN REJECTS URANIUM**

**The residents of Retortillo y Villvieja del Yeltes in Salamanca oppose the controversial project to build the only open-air uranium mine in Europe.**



Open-air mining affects us all and affects future generations as well. It damages the environment since it contaminates rivers, destroys vegetation reduces fauna and causes respiratory and genetic illnesses. They have already cut down 4,000 oak trees and they are going to destroy 20,000 more. It is sheer ecocide. Who would want to eat anything grown in that area?

Just over two years ago, a consumers' co-operative, called EnergÉtica, was established in Castille and Leon to work towards a new energy model. They want **to use clean energy from a renewable source and to do this as a cooperative**. The same type of thing exists in other places under different names. The aim is to have regional not-for-profit co-operatives which will work closely together and not compete with one another.

We have seen alarming reports from biologists, physicists and ecologists. They tell us about the deterioration of Mother Earth. Since we had the possibility of making a change, we decided to take the step and we have discovered how easy it is. The family who rents us the house have no problem with it. In fact, they want to do the same thing in their own house in Salamanca.

Now we are part of EnergÉtica. This project is attracting more families as members every day. Detailed information about it can be found on the Internet at: [energeticacoop.es](http://energeticacoop.es). We are not asking for this to be less expensive (the cost is more or less the same) but to use energy which does not damage the Planet so that we can contribute our grain of sand to promote life. Will you join us?

*Community of Florida de Liébana*

## DIALOGUE, A PATH TO COMMUNION



Mr. Z and his wife, K. had six children. But they never came together as a family to talk about their life. Each one lived independently. Then, one day, the wife decided, on her own accord, to send one of their daughters to her brother. That was when war broke out in the family. It was as if this event

stirred up the stagnant water that was in the heart of the head of the family and exposed all that was ruminating in his mind. Remember, we are in a patriarchal system here.

Without knowing anything about all this, one day in a simple conversation with the husband, I asked how his wife and children were. He was furious and said that he would prefer having another wife than live with her and her children. Some days later, Mr. shared with me about his relationship to his wife and children. He shared the incident of his wife sending their daughter to her brother without consulting him and how it was making a mockery of him, hurting and deeply humiliating him.

Later, having prayed over this I spoke to his wife as well, who shared her family joys and sorrows with me in the presence of her husband. I also listened to the children.

Together with Sr. Ongwisa who accompanied me, we realized that LACK OF DIALOGUE was the root cause of all.

- Mr. Z. provided food for the family took care of the schooling of the four youngest children but did not share anything with his wife. The children, especially the two eldest daughters worked in the fields to provide for some of their needs. He had not given his eldest son any share of his land. For one year the couple was not in good terms.
- Mrs K. accused him of his infidelity. She made decisions without consulting him.
- The children, while recognising the good done by parents, reproached them for never having a family

conversation. They were more attached to their mother than the father.

Listening became vital in the process of reconciliation. We admired how each one listened respectfully, recognising the truth and accepting the mistakes made. Their sharing was very moving. I cried when I realised how “dead” their life had been.



Each one wanted to begin anew so that experience peace and joy in the home. Empathetic listening helped me to respect each one at where (s) he was. I was fully confident that light would dawn. We searched together and discovered that the lack of dialogue was the cause of it all. We discussed together of ways to move forward, each member taking responsibility for one's share in it. As a result the father expressed his desire to be baptized and married in church. Some days later, they celebrated this experience of reconciliation having a meal with our community. We prayed together and in the process shared with them of who we are as Holy Family – with the mission of communion, called to reveal the family

face of the Church. It was also an opportunity to introduce *Holy Family Lay Associates*.

The eldest daughter spoke and said, “it is the first time since I was born that we have come together to share our life. I thank the Lord and the Sisters who took the initiative to bring us together and to offer us this opportunity to be reconciled.

## HOPING AGAINST HOPE

At last, little Jeremie has got his strength back. He can now run and enjoy being with his friends. *GOOD NEWS!*

Let us thank God for this marvel!

Little Jeremie is gradually emerging from the tunnel after a long, difficult illness. From November 2014 until July 2017, little Jeremie MUKONGO, aged eight and a half, personified his name “Jeremie as the lamentations of the prophet Jeremiah in the Bible” always hoping for a cure. He endured a long, painful struggle between life and death, disfigured by malnutrition and burns. (His whole body was a raw sore.) See *Interconnections* No.45, January 2016. His misery was a cry of distress. “I am hungry, I am thirsty, I am abandoned, I am left alone”. Nobody could ignore Jeremie’s cries of suffering which symbolised the cries of so many abandoned children throughout the world. And through these cries, Christ shouts his thirst and launches an urgent appeal for universal solidarity, sisterhood and brotherhood. “If anyone

*To summarise:*

*AVAILABILITY-LISTENING-RESPECTFUL ACCEPTANCE are indispensable if COMMUNITY (or the family) is to be or BECOME A PLACE OF CELEBRATION AND JOY.*

*Marie Paule Balula, HFB*



gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you he will not lose his reward”. Matt 10:42.

We could not turn deaf ears or be indifferent to little Jeremie’s cries of misery which echoed the frailty of our own mortal state. A whole solidarity chain was formed at local and international levels “to give a cup of water” to Jeremie and, in this way, to respond to the loving invitation of Jesus for him and for all vulnerable people, because “I was hungry, and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, a stranger and you took me in, naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, a prisoner and you came to

see me". (Matt 25: 35-36) And today, how wonderful it is that our Jeremie has got back his strength and is happily becoming part of society again.

We say a very big "thank you" to all the people who lovingly helped and continue to help, with hope and perseverance, to restore Jeremie physically, psychologically and materially.

We are sincerely grateful to:

- The medical staff of the NGOSO hospital, especially, Dr. Dady MUNGIMUR and Nurse Emery MUSUNGI.
- Sr. Ana Maria ALCALDE, our General Leader, for her attentiveness and the material aid given in collaboration with other people of goodwill.
- The *Holy Family* community in NGOSO, especially Nathalie



MUPEPE and Eugénie KAYIBO, as well as the whole parish community for the love and interest they had for Jeremie.

- Jeremie and his mother Arlette, who were always patient and hopeful during Jeremie's long, painful illness.

- Jeannine MANZUETO for her help and constant availability to go to Kinshasa for medication.

All is grace. Once again, a very big "Thank you" to everyone.

Let us celebrate together, Jeremie MUKONGO's healing.

*Sr. Pauline MANZUETO*

### **INTERNATIONAL MEETING TO DEEPEN OUR "ROOTS" (From French and Spanish group) MARTILLAC, September 2017**

We thought of you to go to the meeting in Martillac organised by the "ROOTS" Team. My response was one of deep joy: Martillac...deepening our roots... an international meeting... a wealth of expectations... My response was a spontaneous "Yes".

Like everything else, "There were two sides to the story" but that did not weigh too heavily on me.

It was a sisterly meeting of thirty four Sisters. We were three from Spain – M<sup>a</sup>

Paz Aizcorbe, M<sup>a</sup> Jesús Amundarain and Sabina Riaño.

We were so happy to meet one another, to get to know one another or to meet one another again; to see around the house, the grounds, the vines about to bear fruit; to celebrate the Eucharist with the Contemplatives and members of the parish with music from many different countries... "Everything a song to life, to inclusivity and interrelatedness."

"We are here to deepen the gift of our Charism." We have time to reflect, pray,

share, and celebrate. Let us be open to what is new and welcome the light which comes to us today without losing the essence of things. It is a time of mutual enrichment 200 years after our Foundation. We are "The Future Daughters". The Roots Team, as we all know, is the response to a proposal of the 2014 General Chapter. This Team had done some excellent work and presented their plan of the various stages of the meeting. Some texts were suggestions on how to understand the Charism in the light of the new cosmic consciousness. They were intended "to enlighten us, to help to make a journey from the heart", to be open to what was happening within ourselves and to welcome God's gift coming to us from others, inspirations, images... Knowing that we do have answers to everything means that we always have to leave the door of our heart open, awaken our consciousness to a greater whole, move out of that which has always been and

embark on a journey... "See I make all things new... I build a pathway through the desert..."

The following are some of the desires expressed on the first day: To allow ourselves to be surprised amazed, to make an inner journey together, to listen to the "roots" within us, to listen to the Good Father today, to be open, to be open, to be open... And the Spirit was opening us up through the texts, prayer and sharing, through the "sacred ground" we were walking on, through allowing ourselves to be surprised by the dynamism which our Charism of "God Alone" has today; opening us up to find God "in all things", in the ALL, in the I AM.

I think all of you will be curious and have the desire to make this journey. We will make that journey together as a Family because that is how we inherited the gift of the Charism. The Founder's dream opens unexpected doors for us. "Nothing can now hold you back".

*Sabina Riaño, Community of Fuenlabrada.*



**Everything is a song to life, to inclusivity and interrelatedness!**



## INTERNATIONAL MEETING TO DEEPEN OUR “ROOTS” (From English group)

Thirty two sisters from the Institute – all English speaking but from a spread of nationalities and cultures, gathered in Martillac from 14<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017, together with members of the Roots Team, to reflect on important aspects of our Charism; to gather fresh insights in the light of the Emerging Universe Story and to prepare to take an active role in the presentation of these reflections at Unit level in a creative, ongoing way.

The experience was valuable, enlightening and very challenging. It is hoped that the richness coming to the participants in these days through prayerful contemplation and reflection, will spill over into each Unit as together we move outward and onward in preparation for the celebration of our 200 year foundation and the deeper insertion of our Charism in the Church and world today.

### **Personal experiences...**

This was truly a blessed experience for me. There was so much richness in the gathering and valuable sharing of thoughts, ideas and lived experience both at small group and Assembly level. There was a generous effort to listen, be open to the new, to question and to be heard. There was life and an abundance of energy in this gathering of sisters and a felt willingness and generosity about bringing the process forward.

I felt privileged and graced to have been part of this experience. I just hope I can bring something of what I have lived here into my Unit. The content of the Texts carry within them fresh insights,

new calls and many challenges. I am sincerely grateful to the Roots Team for all the hard work that has gone into the preparation of this session.

*Margaret Bradley (B & I)*

It gives me a deep sense of joy, and gratitude in participating the session animated by the “Roots” Team. The “cosmic walk” helped me to be in connection with the origin of the universe and to feel part of the whole universe. It was a call I heard to enter into the process and to grow in the spirit of God Alone. The prayer with a hymn – with a beautiful melody, the whole atmosphere of silence, the beauty of nature, solitude of Martillac and interactions with the sisters enabled me to get in touch with the core of my being and to be reflective. In our group, we shared our reflections freely, each member felt respected, listened to and supported. Entering into the reflections helped us to grow in the desire to move from where we are to experience the loving presence of God in all beings, and in identifying our struggles. In this process, I felt the necessity to grow in silence and contemplation that would enable me to grow in my interiority (uniqueness) and in promoting differences that leads to live communion. This journey is a challenge to grow in adult faith, unlearning the old beliefs that go against living a new vision, touching the sacred depths of all beings, going beyond, embracing our five vocations, making a whole. “One could say our only real purpose is to know who we are as divine beings and

to know all others as divine .....”  
Therefore the call to live communion is a commitment of continuous growing in consciousness of what separates me from experiencing the presence of God, being passionate of the sufferings of this world, being open and becoming a person of love, gentleness, compassion, healing and reconciliation and moving towards fulfillment. It is another beginning in my journey.

*Marina Jeevam, Martillac.*

Beginning with cosmic walk we walked our journey for twelve days in our holy land, in Martillac, with our Roots Team.....

This wonderful experience called me towards an inner journey, to be one with the Love Energy / God within me. New discoveries began to emerge in me, with challenges and invitations as if they were bursting forth from within. The constant call ringing in my heart was to become more contemplative. There is an invitation to grow in the awareness of the presence of God, by being present to the present moment. There is a lot to treasure in my heart and ponder, in seeing incarnation as the ongoing revelation of God's Love, beginning with the very first flaring forth.

With all these challenging reflections I hear the call to become Christ conscious, and I see within me, the spirit of communion with the Earth family and with the cosmic family growing.

Heartfelt thanks to the Roots Team and all those involved, for this precious gift we received.

*Chandrani Dias, Colombo.*

### **Thanks to God...**

Whenever I entered the Hermitage-Martillac, the words of our Founder “I have found only God Alone... God Alone” used to resonate in my ears. Yes indeed it is a marvellous gift... a priceless treasure... Deepening our spirituality in this our Holy Land was really a rich and joyful experience for me, THANKS TO GOD. Participating at the session on “Roots”, I have grown in my understanding of God alone. GOD ALONE- GOD ALL ONE... to see God in everything and everything in God. Thus I am strengthened to live my contemplative vocation fully by experiencing oneness in everything - to say with St.Paul, “In God, we live, move and have our being”. Realization that each and every being is born of Divine Love challenged me strongly. Everything is sacred and unique. Even within the seemingly wickedness, we are able to recognize the Divine. At the same time, I was tempted to ask myself, “If God is only Love alone, why is there so much suffering? Where is our Christian faith in this new world view? We are supposed to be moving forward, if so, why is witness value lacking today among us?” Here I receive a personal call to let go of my fears and to surrender myself to God, being convinced of the fact that “I am a spiritual being on a human journey”. There is a long way to go. Let me begin in a slow and steady way. Thanks to everyone who provided this opportunity for me.

*Rishmala Michael, Nagoda.*

### **Heard The Call To Be A Whole Maker...**

“All that IS, exists by sharing its life.” This became a reality when we started our journey, to deepen certain aspects



of our charism, originating from one single Source as God's self-expression of Love. Surrounded by the natural beauty of Martillac, we were immersed in silence and solitude, deeply reflecting communion in all. No doubt we were moved from within, experiencing the miracle and the mystery of nature – her inter-relatedness, inter-connectedness, inter-dependence.

As a member of 'Roots' team I experienced the great availability, readiness, openness and attitude of listening in the group throughout the session. There was a lot of energy and creativity that emerged as days unfolded. It was a very rich experience for all of us. The rays of hope and great

potential for leadership surfaced as we journeyed together. In a way, this was also a learning process for the participants, to facilitate groups when they go out from here to their own units. Feeling the power of the collective body we saw the challenges which lie ahead of us – to awaken each member in our family to care for our common home.

New calls are awaiting for us and we cannot remain here. Hoping to share this experience with the members of the unit the group dispersed with renewed energy. In this journey we are not alone but we are connected.

*Dammika Fernando – Roots team*

## A NORTH-SOUTH JOURNEY ACROSS THE ISLAND

Forty-nine members of the Association of the Holy Family founded by Pierre-Bienvenu Noailles (PBN) made a north-south journey across the island-nation to strengthen peace and foster reconciliation in the country.

Participants from the north left Jaffna and travelled towards Colombo. They stopped at about 50 km from the capital, where they spent three days at the

convent of Wennappuwa, staying in the homes of other members of the same Catholic community.

Despite the brevity of the visit and "the difficulty of understanding a different language," they all attest to "deep affections and friendships".

The event took place from 8-10 June. The pilgrims - 30 young women and

girls, 12 lay women and seven sisters – came from the districts of Jaffna, Mannar and Vavuniya. For them, the meeting provided an opportunity to "share the strong love we have for each other".

For this reason, "we would like more exchange programmes," Thushari, from Colombo, told *Asia News*. "This way, we can build good, reciprocal relationships."

"A few months ago, a request came for the meeting and we welcomed it," said Sister Priyanka Perera, national leader of the Holy Family Lay group (Supasa). "We hope to continue this for the future too."

For Sister Judith and Sister Christine, the exchange can be defined as "the good start of a long journey in which we can deepen the relationship between the provinces of Colombo and Jaffna". All the travellers were "amazed at the warm reception they received. They even decorated various places."

An elderly mother received a plant as a reminder of the trip to the south. "I will plant it with love," she said, "like a tree of the Holy Family. I hope this plant will become a big tree and similarly our family too will grow."

The pilgrims not only received gifts, but also reciprocated this hospitality. For

example, Margaret Fernando who hosted Quincy and Shalika - two youth from Jaffna - for a night said, "they did not allow me to prepare breakfast. They wanted to cook pittu for me - prepared with corn flour and coconut, and an omelette with curry. For me it was like receiving the affection of two daughters."

On 8 June, the travellers were welcomed with the Aubowan, a wish of long life, followed by singing and dancing in the Sinhalese and Tamil traditions.



The next day they attended Mass, celebrated by Fr Tanter, a priest Associate. At the end of the service, they visited Santh Samaya, a home for the elderly sisters and children, and Meth Niwesa, another home for older women.

*Colombo– Sri Lanka*

