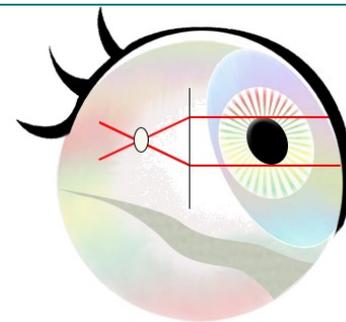


SESSION  
—FOR  
ACCOMPANERS

Martillac,  
17 – 28 January  
2018



**THEME:** Accompaniment through a new lens

It was 17 January 2018 - the Pavilion Noailles in Martillac, was filled with 40 sisters. Even though the weather being dull - a chilly and gloomy morning - the atmosphere was full of Life, Joy and the participants brought with them their expectations for the session... it was indeed a moment of HOPE! Inside the hall, attention was drawn to the purpose of the session with the Objectives, a communicable logo and its theme: “Accompaniment through a new lens”.

Yes! The international initial formation team had organized a session for accompaners from the 17 – 28 January 2018 in Martillac, as planned earlier, when they met in Rome in 2016.

**Overall Purpose:**

To explore opportunities offered by a faith reading of the Emerging Story, for a different way of living Religious Life today and see accompaniment of new members in that light.

**Objectives**

- To enter into a process of deepening the Emerging Story from a faith perspective
- To deepen understanding of Formation for mission, with emphasis on importance of dialogue, discernment and the dynamics of change
- To offer an opportunity to deepen and internalise the experience of each day
- To offer new insights for a way forward in the process of formation, in order to make space for a new way of living our HF religious life.

**Process:**

The whole session was a process of *reflection, deep listening, communal dialogue and communal discernment*.

Kumudinie Dassanayake opened the floor with a warm welcome to all the participants. She presented an overall view of the session, explaining the theme, the Objectives and the process. Then Geni dos Santos invited the members to introduce themselves briefly to one another. Shanthi Simon - the coordinator of the team, formally introduced the Facilitators, Margaret MULDOON and Colleen MOORE, to the gathering.



Ana Maria Alcalde then addressed the gathering and explained the purpose of the session, inviting them to enter this time in a spirit of openness and willingness to unlearn and learn.

She emphasized that we are in a completely new socio-cultural context, very different from previous decades and hence the need to question ourselves:

Are we able to put new wine into new wineskins?

Does the present Formation Process touch the person's heart and really transform it, enabling the person *"to live the mission generously and courageously, to dialogue with culture and to be inserted in society and the Church"*?

With the words of the Founder, *"Go forward..."* she wished the participants energy and courage to live this session to the full!

**The participants took some time to buzz with their neighbour, to share what has touched them in the inspiring message of Ana Maria.**

**The Opening Prayer** began with the procession, carrying the elements of life - water, air, earth, fire and space, while singing the song - "In the name of all that IS, we come together." Appreciating, valuing and being grateful to the contribution of these five components to the web of life, they were placed at the spiral in the centre of the hall. Each member also carried something to symbolize life on our Earth. The prayer ended with a dance of light, a moment of God's glory within the delicate web of life, which no doubt awakened in all a sense of awe and gratitude.



**In the afternoon**, Margaret and Colleen, the two facilitators initiated the process. They emphasised that they all are journeying together, each bringing a variety of experiences and intuitions for the good of the whole. The request to the participants was to listen deeply to what is moving within and among them and to allow themselves to be surprised by what's emerging.

***Some expectations of members for the session:***

- ◆ Learn skills to co-journey
- ◆ Know more about formation and self
- ◆ A thirst for God ever revealing and allow to be accompanied
- ◆ Deepen faith and commitment in the light of the Emerging world view
- ◆ Deepen experience of accompaniment in the Holy Family – learn practical points in accompanying – have more insights

The first reflection based on **Go Forward** was to help all to hear the Holy Family story in the context of the Great Story of the Universe. It was an invitation to celebrate Our Holy Family Story as an amazing story of God's Love, still being written and told....

**The story of a young man who fell in love with God - PIERRE BIENVENU NOAILLES** who dreamed of building *a new society* after the French revolution.

Small and fragile beginnings were held together by a vision of a new society, by members who were willing to take risks, to set out on a new path, inspired by a deep love for God, capable of listening deeply, and responding to the call to give a prophetic response to the signs of their time.

- \* Two Hundred Years later – new needs, new insights, a new world... evolving, becoming... unfinished....
- \* Where are we today? How much of our early pioneer spirit and passion for mission of Christ remain in us?
- \* Are we ready for New Beginnings through a new lens?
- \* Have we settled down and stopped growing?

The participants entered into reflection and sharing in small groups on the following question - **What invitations do you hear, for our life as Holy Family members committed for the mission of communion?**

*What emerged from group sharing:*

- ◆ To initiate a relational model of community with passion and commitment to give birth to something new which is relevant for today.
- ◆ An urgency to let go of our successful past and allow to be surprised by the newness that is coming in.
- ◆ Live in the spirit of our Founder, have a vision of a new era, living in the present, dreaming and moving towards the future.
- ◆ Need to transmit our charism in the language of the young of different cultures
- ◆ Reawaken the pioneer spirit, ready to go out of ourselves and live the exodus.
- ◆ See everything as sacred, leading us to live in the spirit of God Alone – being gentle in dealing with all of creation.
- ◆ Grow in the consciousness of Oneness, deeply experiencing God, transcending all that limits, being for the Whole in contemplation, stillness and communal discernment.
- ◆ Among us, nurture deep dialogue about dreams, challenges, ways of seeing life, the way we connect with each other and feel responsible for the transformation of the Whole.
- ◆ Believe that our Holy Family story is a love story, the story of each of us now, and the story of those who will come. What a beauty to accompany each other's love story!

**Every day, the session ended with a time of integration and journaling!**

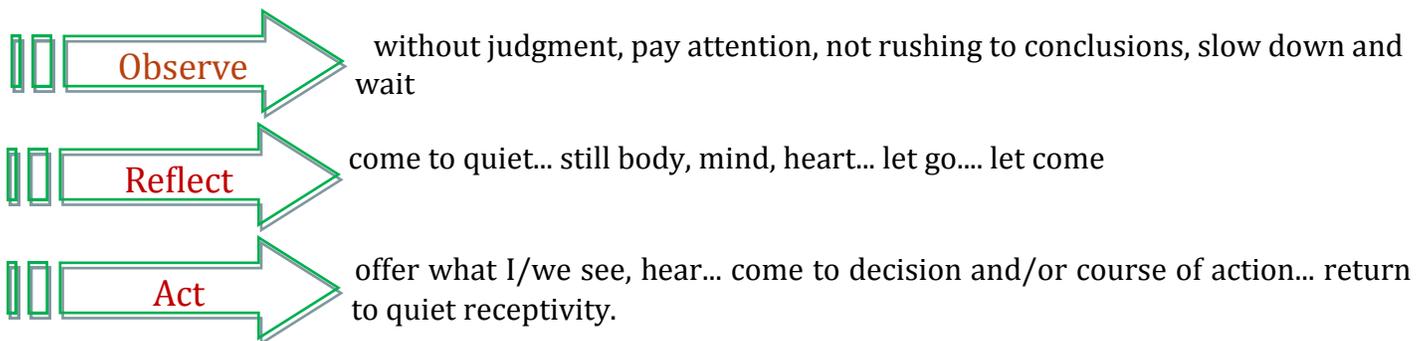


## The Second Day – 18th January

All gathered in the hall at 7.10 am with great enthusiasm. The Morning Prayer was an experience of the **COSMIC WALK**. Indeed a time of contemplation and wonder!

*From this day onwards, after having the Morning Prayer together in the hall, the participants worked in the three language groups separately. Margaret and Colleen took charge of the English group, Adela and Geni, the Spanish and French groups respectively. Every evening, the last hour before supper, all assembled together again in the hall, to listen to the sharing of each group and for a time of conversation.*

### Three Movements in the Contemplative Process



The Call is to LISTEN DEEPLY and dialogue, which alone can effect change. As a Holy Family community called to act creatively at this moment of history, our vision becomes clearer and the most generous response becomes possible for us.



### Contemplative Living

Contemplation is the fundamental reality of life. It makes us truly human. Contemplation goes beyond concepts and sees God.... as the Reality within our reality, the Being within our being, the life of our life. (Thomas Merton)

Reflecting on **FORMATION FOR MISSION**, the participants had space in the afternoon, to share their lived experiences in the process of initial formation, in relation to the Guidelines given in the booklet of 2012.

The day's reflection was on **COMMUNAL DIS-CERNMENT THROUGH CONTEMPLATIVE DIALOGUE**.

**Contemplation** is taking a long loving look at the real, centers all that we are, and all we desire to be on the movement of God's spirit. It means to LIVE OUT of a "cleared space" in which God's spirit dwells.

### Contemplative Dialogue

Together we build on insights, encourage curiosity, make connections, and seek patterns.

Rooted in our charism and history - contemplative thinking together revitalizes our purpose and sets direction for a new era.

In small groups they shared on the following question: **What will you find helpful in the text, for developing a way of accompaniment that motivates for mission today?**

Their sharing revealed:

Contemplation as a new consciousness calling for deep listening and taking a long, loving look at the real;

Accompaniment as a journeying together – mutually learning, welcoming the giftedness in the new lives, discovering the unique action of God, allowing to grow through mistakes, where missionary dynamism is lived and enhanced through encounter and engagement in the world reality and a mutual listening with Open Mind, Open Heart and Will takes place, with no prejudices or comparisons.

As formators they realized the importance of witnessing as communities that welcome, respect differences and take care of each other “living as loving sisters”.



“Take the path of a pastoral and missionary conversion which cannot leave things as they are presently.

**I DREAM OF A MISSIONARY  
DYNAMISM...**

(Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium 27)

The theme for the day’s reflection based on **THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE** underlined that it is a sacred journey – both individual and communal - which involves important elements.

**Third Day – January 19**

A time of Prayer in Contemplative silence with the word :

“I have come that you may have life to the full.” (Jn 10, 10)

**Commitment to sincere following of Christ** – this requires self-emptying, a continual letting go in surrender to God's loving embrace.

**Prayer and contemplative silence to discern and articulate the unity of our mission, the relevance of our ministries.....celebrate in community and communicate to new members.**

**A New Pioneer Spirit** - letting go of the past and embracing the unknown through faith, prayer and risking ...

**Communal discernment** - ... a new way of creating community... a process of deep listening to one another, of grieving and letting go, so new models can emerge...

***New members in religious institutes must, before all else, be interiorly formed for community life.*** And it is also important to *prepare them for the variety of lifestyles* in which they may eventually participate.

## 19<sup>th</sup> afternoon – creativity... art... poetry...

A time of entering into the Sacred Space to behold the Sacred, emerging and evolving through colour, shapes, images, words.... It was a moment of experiencing the joy of the gifts of the Creator Spirit flowing through each participant... a prayer.... a revelation... a healing... wonder... gratitude!



The evening Assembly brought out the fruits of their reflection and sharing on **'questions/comments that will be helpful in the development of our Formation for Mission.'**

Importance was stressed on becoming pioneer communities, deep listening that encourages to live the Paschal Mystery, experiencing letting go for new life; passion to live deeply the sincere following of Christ in the Holy Family way and to form com-

munities that enter into the dynamics of change, of transformation.

The questions came in the form of: how do we keep our Charism alive today in the way we live community life and the quality of our witness? How to create spaces for open sharing of crises, enabling people to deal with them and move toward? What is blocking us personally and as Institute and what needs to be done to open the

door to change and evolution?



### Fourth Day – 20th January

Contemplative silence with the word – *“Were not our hearts burning within us...”* (Lk. 24)

The reflection for this morning was on - **THE PRINCIPLES OF THE UNIVERSE**, enabling to see a link with **'Loving, seeking and desiring God alone in all things'**.

In the new sacred story relationships are the primary context of existence.

The terms **'subjectivity, differentiation, and communion'** are the laws, or **three Principles of the Universe** that hold all things together.

- 👉 **Differentiation (Diversity)** - Each of us is different from the other, each one of us a unique manifestation of the Divine, with its identity, dignity, inner spontaneity, sacred dimension.
- 👉 **Subjectivity** – is essence of who we ARE. Each thing has a sacred depth, an inner beauty, innate value... All is Mystery. Through contemplation one sinks deeply into the interiority of one's being which becomes a deepening of the capacity for communion with all things.
- 👉 **Communion is the interrelationship** of the universe within itself and the interconnectedness of each part with the whole... all bonded together as a seamless whole.

**Choosing to enter into communion with the Universe means choosing to become love.**

**Loving, seeking and desiring God alone in all things** - leads us deeply into living diversity, interiority and communion with self, others, and the whole Earth community.

👉 In their personal reflection, the participants were invited to see how the small group process becomes part of a communal discernment together.

The reflection on the **TEN POWERS of the Universe** began *in the afternoon*, which continued into the whole of the following day.

**POWERS** are ways of the Universe and therefore the way God is and how we are. From the **FIRST FLARING FORTH**, from a single speck, the Universe expands into a huge, intricate Whole that envelops all that is... All the powers of the universe emerge out of **Seamlessness** – harmonizing – like chords of music, all playing at the same time. Our lives come out of and are woven into this tapestry of wholeness – of life – the mystery of **LOVE**, of **COMMUNION**.



The first three powers were dealt with in the afternoon.

## 1. Centration (Concentration)

- It is the way in which the Universe centers or concentrates upon itself in order to give birth to a new being; a new being that includes within itself all that went before it, all the way back to the beginning. With the human, a self-reflective consciousness emerges.

Jesus offered a new vision of human life based on radical equality which he called the Kingdom of God. Eucharistic Centration calls us to focus our attention on the all-pervading Presence of Divine Wonder in all of creation.

## 2. Allurement (Attraction)

- It is the way Universe holds itself together through an attraction that pervades on every level (gravity) - Brian Swimme

This energy ensured that the Universe continued to evolve. Gravity, is a deeply mysterious influence. In the human it has given rise to some of the greatest loves, healings and beauties.

The Gospels relate how all sorts of people were drawn to Jesus – the sick, the outcasts, the sinners, the rich, the poor.

### 3. Emergence (Creativity)

◦ refers to the fact that the Universe is not so much a place as it is a story, an ongoing creative event. (Brian Swimme)

The Universe Story is an endless story of creativity where in critical moments creativity has prevented disaster... a creative movement towards wholeness, towards **more** or Oneness that we call God.

The powerfully symbolic act of Jesus's self-giving love, releases our own creativity to break out of old moulds, to look for wider horizons...



Personal reflection and sharing in small groups was based on the question: **In the light of today's reflection, what aspects we find helpful in our accompaniment – in community and of the new members?**

Seeing 'Accompaniment through a new lens' the participants emphasized the following aspects as important:

An everyday process of being with, deeply listening to the meaning that the new member gives to her life, welcoming the sacredness and uniqueness of the person; an attitude of respect and trust which facilitates growing in inner freedom, transparency and truth; being non-judgmental, let go of pre-conceived ideas and mind-sets and allow to be stretched; offering help to - live moments of chaos and disturbance in the journey with hope; help discover the Oneness and know how to integrate the differences; be focused on Jesus, being engaged with his project of love and communion.

#### Fifth Day – 21<sup>st</sup> January

#### Contemplative silence with the word – "Remain in my love..." (Jn 15)

The reflection that began the previous afternoon on the Powers of the Universe continued.

### 4. Homeostasis (Maintaining achievement)

◦ refers to the way in which the Universe holds on to what is valuable, the way it protects and maintains what it has put a lot of energy into achieving... conditions that enable the Earth to continually recreate itself.

In humans it shows in a deep drive for justice and a concern for the weak and unprotected. Its extreme is controlling, and utter commitment to traditional beliefs and practices. *"It was always done this way around here"*.

Jesus expressed the essence of his mission in one short phrase *"I came that you may have life and have it to the full."* In the Eucharist we are contracting into the Jesus vision to enhance all of life, especially the lives of those who are weak and vulnerable and threatened.

### 5. Cataclysm - (Destruction)

◦ Cataclysm arises out of situations of crisis and tension. All of the most significant advances in the Story of the Universe have arisen in moments of apparent disaster... it enables the process of death and rebirth. With each loss there is an opportunity for something new to arise.

For Jesus, it cost his own life to realize his dream for the new life. Eucharist enables us to enter into the chaos of life with hope, confidence and expectancy, so that the power of the Resurrection may be manifest in us, and the broken parts of our world made whole.

## Synergy - (Working together)

Synergy is about being together, **in relationship** in the Universe. Synergy is what happens when the efforts of individuals are harnessed to create a co-operative, functioning whole.

Trinity can be seen as an example of Divine Synergy. God's new reign in Jesus was to be built on mutually enhancing relationships of radical equality. The Eucharist is a celebration of the coming together of the gifts, for the whole community, for the good of all creation.

## 7. Transmutation (Changing of self)

refers to the way in which the Universe calls for change at the individual level, a way the Universe forces itself out of one era into another.

Self-awareness emerged in the human as a result. As individuals we can become sources of generativity (life giving) and healing, and begin to positively shape and transform the whole.

Jesus felt a deep compulsion to bring about fundamental change - **the radical equality of all humans, and of the unity of all things.**

A Cosmic Eucharist invites us to interpret "This is My Body" in a way that embraces the whole Universe in its vastness and complexity.

## 8. Transformation (Changing the whole)

It is the way in which the Universe takes changes on the individual level and works them into the larger context. The Power of Transformation is how the Universe can be changed by the Power of the individual.

This power in the human expresses itself in an eagerness to enhance life.

Jesus wanted to transform the whole earth by empowering people to live to their full potential. The Eucharist invites us to be part of the Jesus movement to bring about a universal reign of peace and justice for all.

## 9. Inter-Relatedness – (Care)

is about care and relationships. Care is something that appeared in the Universe with the emergence of life itself. Life and care are intimately related.

This power at work in the human shows itself in the deep desire to be in relationship.

Interrelatedness is at the heart of the Mystery we call God and is at the heart of the Eucharist. When we celebrate the Eucharist, the whole web of life is participating in the celebration.

The participants were deeply touched by the way these reflections enabled them to see how the Powers of the Universe are at work in

nature, in us humans, in Jesus and how it broadened their understanding of the Eucharist!



All the powers are one.

They are all, ways of  
bringing radiant  
energy through the  
universe.

## Sixth Day – 22<sup>nd</sup> January

Prayer was based on **RADIANCE** - the 10<sup>th</sup> Power of the Universe.

## 10. Radiance

**Radiance** is the way Universe communicates its beauty, magnificence and the way we participate in feeling part of the Universe... Radiance requires relationship. What is radiated must be received.

Humans experience radiance through resonance with some source - the setting sun, another human being, Divine Mystery...

Eucharist as the sacrament of Divine Radiance, impels us to reach out to all, and to be sensitive to Divine Radiance wherever it glows. It invites us to become the living bread, the Body of Christ.

**The rest of the morning**, was a time of being with nature, looking beneath the surface and listening deeply. Each one was free to express her experience in writing, art, poetry.

Nothing in Nature lives for itself.  
Rivers don't drink their own water.  
Trees don't eat their own fruit.  
The Sun doesn't shine for itself.  
Living for each other is the Rule of Nature.  
(source unknown)

**The theme for reflection in the afternoon was - PERCEPTION...Through a new lens**

Growing consciousness and changed perception go together. A shift in our perception of who we are came with the landing on the moon, a new way of looking at Earth...to recognize it as a living system... Awe and mystery invite us into new insights about Creator, creation and the Earth community of Life.

In formation, it means to see accompaniment, community life, ministry, through a new lens - to 'Think outside the box'. Living in the box gives a sense of false security, it validates, reinforces our own opinions. We have a choice: stay in the box, ignore the calls, deny the need for change OR choose to **look deeply**, to wonder, and to ask deeper questions ... Perspective makes all the difference.

Through which lens are we looking?

**Yearning or longing for a new way will not produce anything - only ending the old way will do that - (Richard Rohr)**

**We are part of the earth community and as members of H/F sent to promote communion - how do we see the world?**

***The Sharing highlighted the need to -***

develop stillness, silence and contemplation, to be in awe at the Mystery of the Universe; become more compassionate, merciful and inclusive for the mission; find the sacred both in the shadow and light, for new life emerges through pain and suffering; recognize the tendency to operate from our old way of looking at life which needs an attitude of discernment; learn from Nature that lives for the other... challenging us to be self-giving; see Earth as a mystery of incarnation of God, interconnected, interdependent, calling to deep relationships of respect and gratitude; a deeper understanding of the Eucharist in this light.

***The participants realized that all this challenges the way of living our mission of communion and the way we do formation.***



## Seventh Day – 23<sup>rd</sup> January

Contemplative silence – praying with the word :  
“In the beginning was the Word...” (Jn. I, 1)



**Celebrating Crisis** was the theme for the morning reflection.

The evolutionary story that is now unfolding is of an interconnected, interdependent, living universe, in which humans are rooted in nature, in mutuality with the natural world.

**It's only through the change of human consciousness that the world will be transformed.**

People don't want to be stuck in boxes and told what to do. We are invited to be creative to bring Life to our group, our community... recognizing that co-operation and collaboration is essential.

Earth does not seek SAMENESS, efficiency and perfection... Life seeks effectiveness, cooperation, collaboration, openness, hence the need of dialogue... discernment.

*The participants took some reflective time to stay with the question - 'What can we learn from this reflection – for ourselves, for religious life and for Holy Family Formation?'*

**In the afternoon** they reflected on the **Evolutionary Story of the Universe**.

**Is our teaching, our formation, in harmony with the conditions of a universe in process of transformation?**

*If we want to bring about deep change, we need to realize that certain mind-sets influence our behaviour. Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature. (LS 215)*

The participants spent time in **becoming aware of the new insights they wish to take into their present formation process**.

What emerged in the sharing was the importance of introducing into our formation, a new ways of thinking about God, human beings, society and our relationship with nature; time and space for stillness and contemplation at a regular basis; a collaborative and cooperative atmosphere to help new members to grow in creativity, freedom, responsibility and accountability... Encourage sustainable living and help them deepen their motivation to be committed for the life of the Whole; not to seek perfection and sameness but value diversity, cooperation and learn to seek HARMONY in the differences; being accompanied as companions, aware that mind-set influences our choices and behavior; attention to initial formation as well to ongoing formation.

**Important aspects that emerged from all conversations in the Assembly:**

- ◇ **To be inspired by the pioneer spirit, to be more dynamic, to be for the Whole** – how to move our new members towards this spirit from the beginning?
- ◇ How do we keep our Charism alive today in the way we live community life?
- ◇ Ask ourselves – ‘do we really need a change’ if we want to be relevant today?
- ◇ We feel stagnated, complacent..... How do we live communal discernment in community/in accompaniment?
- ◇ Are we a closed system that doesn't allow change? We need to name what blocks change in order to ‘de-block’... If we don't change, we **DIE**.

- ◇ How to create space which favours transformation in moments of struggle/crisis?
- ◇ New members come from different faith backgrounds (sometimes very devotional) – in initial formation it is essential that they be helped to go through a transformation in the growth of faith.
- ◇ During the novitiate process, do we help build inner structures so that later, in crisis situations they can stand on their own and make decisions?
- ◇ Need to take seriously the guidelines given - in some places they are not implemented causing situations of ‘Adolescence prolonged’ in initial formation.
- ◇ What kind of formation communities do we need?
- ◇ An important question to ask – *WHY ARE WE TOGETHER IN COMMUNITY?*

### Seventh Day – 24<sup>th</sup> January - Free day

A most welcome and awaited day, after one full week of intensive work – when the participants had the joy of a free day!

Those desiring to take a walk in the footsteps of our Founder, left Martillac house in the morning to visit Bordeaux to have an experience of the places that

were important and had an influence in the life of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles and the history of our Family. It’s worth mentioning that fortunately, it was the only sunny day during the course of the 14 days of stay in Martillac!

Others stayed back, resting as well as continuing work, preparing for the next days.



### Eighth Day – 25<sup>th</sup> January

Time for Contemplative silence focused on the words – “so that Christ may live in our hearts through faith.” (Eph. 3, 17)

**Open hearts to see Love everywhere.....**

**Contemplation – Communion: Seeing with the eyes of the heart**

A regular practice of contemplative prayer awakens us to a new contemplative way, a new way of seeing God in everything and everyone, **seeing with the eyes of the heart**. Our call to love, seek, desire God alone in all things is a path to this contemplative way of living.

In daily life this means that everything is transformed, the most familiar is permeated with the divine presence. This calls us to **live mindfully**. Whatever we do is worship, is Divine expression, is joy.

Jesus repeatedly said that healing and forgiveness comes according to our “faith” – our conscious participation in God’s Love. The faith he wants to change is the one that judges and categorizes people; that sees God as distant or uncaring or threatening or rewarding and punishing.

What are the beliefs I operate out of?

Our life, our living of vowed life, our work and ministry – all is a manifestation of God.

*It was a reflective morning for the participants to re-read the experience of the days spent.*

*In the afternoon* continuing the atmosphere of Contemplative listening and Communal Dialogue, the focus was on hearing what the Spirit is saying to us NOW, as a way forward.

The participants worked in their small groups to re-read the feedback since the first day – with a

clear focus question: *What do you personally feel, is the call addressed to us as Holy Family women responsible for formation for mission?*

Each group was asked to bring two calls to the Assembly for the following morning.

## 26<sup>th</sup> January

### SHARING FROM THE SMALL GROUPS IN ASSEMBLY

The day began as usual with a time of prayer in silent, contemplative listening, after which the 7 groups presented their feedback and time was taken to clarify.

#### The calls heard – common elements

**Contemplative listening** - transforming our concept of God, showing us a new way of being human in community, listening deeply to respond to the cry of the whole earth community.

**A deeper faith** – a conscious participation in God’s unconditional love, loving, seeking and desiring God Alone in all things.

**A new understanding of the Eucharist** – making us more dynamic for the Mission and live communion with the entire universe.

**Be involved in our world reality** – caring for life of whole Earth community

**Re-awaken the pioneer spirit** in our communities

In all community living, we are called to respect, appreciate, celebrate diversity, witnessing to communion. In the inter-cultural communities this means respecting each culture rather than one culture dominating.

In the afternoon, the small groups worked again to come up with *one clear CALL heard* to go forward.

These were gathered and synthesized by the team later in the evening to be presented to the Assembly the following morning.

## Ninth Day – 27<sup>th</sup> January

The team's work of the previous evening on the Calls heard, was presented to the Assembly. After a time of conversation and affirmation, the participants went back to work in their small groups – now, working on practical suggestions for implementation of those calls. Later they came together as Unit groups to see how this experience could be taken back to those co-responsible for formation in their own Units.

## Tenth Day – 28<sup>th</sup> January

On the 28th morning, the participants gathered at 10.30 to bring the session of the 12 days to a close. Ana Maria addressed them with words of courage and hope, based on the parable of the sower. “The sower” she said, “was not a careless sower but one who is generous, who bets on all types of soil, although the bearing of fruit differed - because he trusts the quality of the seed. Jesus offers us the image of God-sower who believes in the possibilities of all kinds of soil.”

She reminded the participants that the 'seeds' that were received during the session, need time and space to germinate, grow and take root, hence to respect the mystery of life in each seed. She emphasized that each one is now called to go and throw that seed in all types of soil - dream already for a rich harvest, risk in hope and wait patiently, for it is God who allows growth and fruit to emerge!

This followed a joyful moment of gathering all fruits in the Closing Prayer and then expressing



sentiments of gratitude to all who had labored behind the scenes and all who continued to give themselves untiringly during the session – especially to Margaret and Colleen, the facilitators who journeyed with the whole group. Their insights, experience and thought provoking interventions were greatly appreciated which indeed made this time fruitful, meaningful and hope-filled!

