

# ECHOS

The Enlarged General Council

Rome



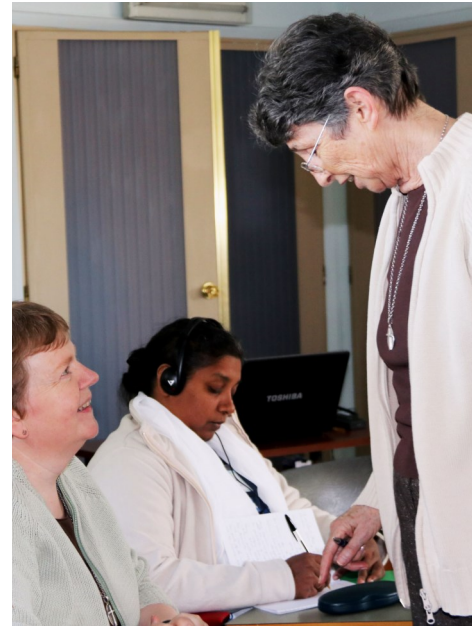
20-31 March 2019



Welcome to our latest Echoes on the Enlarged General Council 2019. You would probably notice; the content of this recap has been extremely reduced.

In fact, you will find only a brief outline for each day. During the EGC, the facilitator together with the participants saw the

importance of giving you the opportunity of having a fresh experience, through a process which will bring you many surprises, create curiosity and a thirst for living this experience. Therefore, the INFO body desires to respect their intention and brings to you only a brief account of the session.



For the second time in just over a year, the Unit Leaders, Vicariate Council members, and General Leadership Team members gathered in Rome. This time, however, there were many “new” faces: eleven of the seventeen Unit Leaders had been named in the intervening months; M. Dolores Sanzberro had become the delegated leader of the Vicariate due to the illness of Bernadette Taurinya, and this time, M. Lourdes de

La Fuente represented the Generalate local community.

So on the morning of March 20th, 27 Sisters (Densilla had not yet arrived from Pakistan due to a visa delay) embarked together on this special 12-day 2019 EGC journey. The air vibrated with different sensations: anticipation, hope, enthusiasm, and a touch of apprehension...



Spring marks the end of winter and the transitional period to summer. The significance of spring or new life was expressed in the opening prayer, which included a beautiful circle dance.



**The prepared prayer corner**

*“Spring is an energetic season of hope, a time of awakening, a stirring and coming alive. Today, we connect ourselves to that energy, that awakening, in all that we are and all that we bring with us – not simply as individual Units but as one body”.*

(From the opening prayer)

Ana Maria ALCALDE, our Superior General, in her opening address explained that this EGC “is in continuity with the previous one; that it precedes and prepares the General Chapter which will take place in 2020.” And

so in the process, they were to explore where they are as ‘body’, look at the lived reality so far, discern the calls of God and the focus of the 2020 General Chapter.



“The focus of the  
2020  
chapter...?”



# Purpose of this EGC:



## Objectives:

### EXPLORE:

To explore together where we are as an institute (as a body) one year after the 2018 EGC



### LOOK AT THE REALITY:

To look at the reality and ascertain the present capacity of the institute to commit ourselves to stop what can no longer continue.



### DISCERN:

To discern what should be the focal point of the 2020 general Chapter and its preparation process, so that it can energize life and mission in this emerging world.



### MAKE DECISIONS:

To make decisions and put them into practice

Taking the floor, the facilitator Matthieu Daum began by saying that “Listening is a fascinating and special thing, a creative force...When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand.” He strongly emphasised the importance of deep listening during this whole process, and provided the group with some tools for listening, which will become familiar to you, for they will be used in the whole body in the months to come.

Throughout these 12 days, the participants worked sometimes in language-groups, sometimes in “mixed” groups; they shared in dyads or trios, and also in the Plenary, but it

was striking that never did they move into sharing without a time of personal reflection, a time of listening to “what was moving within” - the listening essential to any kind of discernment. Each day began with a time for prayer followed by a brief sharing of “overnight thoughts”, listening to where the group was at that particular moment.

A session dedicated to “**getting to know one another better**” involved introductions, movement, changes of “partner” and a good deal of creativity when there was no common language! In the afternoon, the process of sharing the lived experiences since EGC 2018: the “exploration” objective got underway.

## Day: 2

The main work of the day was to discover the lived reality of the Body since the 2018 EGC. The sharing showed that in general, the majority of the members in the Units have become aware of the issues that 'can no longer continue'.

There were many things to learn!

One of the decisions taken by the General Leadership Team after the 2018 EGC was to act on the awareness that certain structures which were not life giving could no longer continue. Thus it was that the Belgium-France-Italy Network ceased to exist; France-Belgium is now one Unit, and Italy is also one Unit, with its own Leadership Team.

Rwanda-Uganda, on the other hand, from being two separate "groups" directly accountable to the GLT, have now become one Unit,

with a Leadership Team consisting of Holy Family members based in the two neighbouring countries.

The Vicariate too shared their journey of living the experience of EGC 2018; due to the illness of the Vicar, much of the animation had been carried out during visits of Sr. Ana María to the four communities.

*"What can no  
Longer  
Continue?"*



## Day: 3

### A day for the General Bursar.

Malinie Jayamanne presented the financial reality of the Institute, along with some elements of a financial and demographic Holy Family forecast for the next 20 years. With the help of two power point presentations, she shared with the participants what has been lived and implemented since EGC 2018 in terms of asset surveys and planning. The necessity for a unified Holy Family financial

system, which can provide for present and future needs, was very clear.

Matthieu reminded the participants that 2018 EGC had been a turning point in their journey and how as EGC members, all had stepped up and accepted to be co-responsible for discerning, at the level of the whole body, for the life and future of the Holy Family; for this, the financial aspect absolutely cannot be neglected as the Institute moves forward.



## Day: 4



Densilla James, the Unit leader of Pakistan, finally arrived to join the group and was given a warm welcome by all.

The day's focus was 'what it means to be a member of this EGC and to be a member of the Holy Family.'

The morning consisted of personal and small group reflection. The necessity for "out of the box" thinking made the participants get in touch with the essence of our identity, of who we really are as Holy Family, and made for an enriching, and quite moving sharing at the afternoon Plenary.

## Day: 5

The facilitator introduced some models and tools for living leadership/membership effectively; you will become acquainted with these and with the insights and questions, they generate, over the coming months.



## Day: 6

*Free day!*

After five intense days, the breathing space was welcomed by all!

Nature was also supportive by providing a perfect sunny day. Most of the group went out – some even leaving very early, to attend mass at St. Peter's! A few (notably some of those who had often been to Rome!) remained at home and relaxed.



## Day: 7

Revived and refreshed, the participants were ready for another six days of work!

This was a day of reconnecting with the past 5 days spent together, and looking deep inside the reality. They went into a time of personal reflection to see what has emerged within

them. After a round of sharing in the small groups, they gathered for the plenary.

Later, a time spent in contemplation in listening to God speaking to them was considered sacred! "What is God saying to us, as a body...?"



## Day: 8

A day of exploration....of discovering, of making choices as member of this EGC!

The question was around *what the Leaders are called to do after the EGC* -looking for ways of widening this movement of new energy to all members of the Body.

Following the same process of time for personal work and sharing in small groups, the participants gathered later met in the hall for a plenary.





## Day: 9



A challenge came in the form of this question – ARE YOU READY to commit?

Stirred up by this, the participants went for personal reflection. Surely, this space of time brought light to see what shifts needed to be taken.

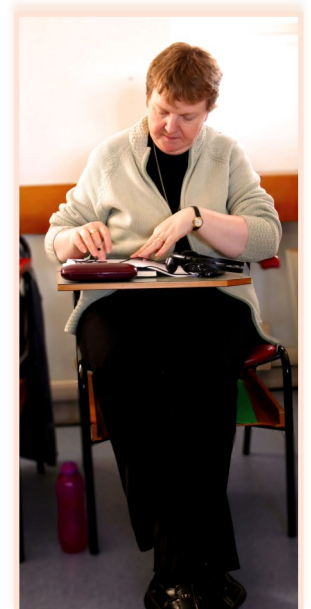
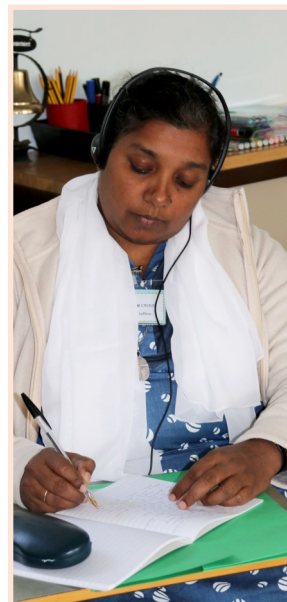
Still, a long way to go! However, we could hear echoes of “If we don’t dare now, then when?” ...

## Day: 10

Inspired by the story of Abraham in the Morning prayer, the facilitator invited the participants to move to a new land!

The focus of the day was General Chapter 2020 - coming to understand the General Chapter and its prep-

aration not as something to be borne, to be “got through”, but as an opportunity, a time of vision, of making decisions that will be life-giving for the mission and for the purpose for which the Holy Family exists.



## Day: 11

“You can’t always wait for the perfect time. Sometimes you must dare to take a leap.”

A day of gathering together all the elements, of re-reading the journey to get the whole picture, and discussing the preparation for the 2020 General Chapter.

Time was spent on the subject of Chapter Preparatory Commission that will work with

the facilitator over the next year. Three members were chosen from amongst the Leaders present; three more Sisters from the Institute and one General Leadership Team member would be named later.

## Working in Groups:



### The focus was:

## Day: 12

- ⇒ How to take this journey forward involving the whole Body?
- ⇒ How to expand the experience lived in this EGC?
- ⇒ Much reflection, group work, and sharing!

At the end of the day, Ana Maria's closing words were encouraging.

*"Let us not give way to the fear of losing the security we have gained from worn-out mental models, the fear of facing up to what cannot continue, the fear of fully assuming our role."*

*Let us live our leadership role with "internal authority". "A bird perched on a tree is never afraid of the branch breaking because its trust is not in the branch, but in its own wings." The invitation is to take wings and fly, together with our Sisters".*

The Closing prayer was a moment for all: Unit Leaders, the Vicariate Council, and the General

Leadership Team, to experience the sense of being one body: they are not alone; they are supported and strengthened by one another. "We cannot make an impact in life without the help of others... to be a dynamic and productive body we need the help of all the parts..." This was symbolized in the passing and receiving of light from one to another, in deep awareness of their connectedness, and also of the commitment which each one silently read before placing the light on the world map.

At the end of the prayer, all sang "Magnificat" with joy and gratitude, remembering Mary, our sign of Hope, who urges us to keep saying "YES" to what God is calling us to be!



