

# ECHOES

The International Formation Session and General Assembly  
of Priest Associates

Martillac: from 17 to 28 October 2016



The International Session for Priest Associates began in Martillac on the morning of 17th October 2016. There were two main parts to this gathering – a formation session from 17th to 23rd and the General Assembly from 25<sup>th</sup> to 28th.



The Opening ritual began with the participants introducing themselves to one another.

Ana Maria then welcomed everyone and, in her opening address, pointed out that the place we were gathered in, is a sacred place for our Family because, even geographically, it brings us close to the source of our Charism and roots: our Founder, his brother who was one of the first Priest Associates, and other members who lived the Charism and passed it on to us.

She said that the awareness of being ONE FAMILY, sharing the same Charism and mission, and of the Vocations as being distinct yet complementary and interdependent has grown in recent years. She reminded us that we all are equally responsible for the vitality of the Charism and the carrying out of

our mission of communion in today's world. The Founder is the POINT OF REFERENCE for the Holy Family but he means something special to Priest Associates. Pierre Bienvenu lived his priestly vocation in a creative, apostolic and dynamic way finding new ways and means of responding to the needs of the turbulent society of his time. He cultivated his own inner life by means of prayer, the Eucharist, diligent meditation on the Word of God, reflection, reading... She underlined the invitation to conversion which Pope Francis gives to priests through his own deeds which are more eloquent than words. She expressed her conviction that "in both ecclesial and international contexts of today, this is a favourable time because it offers many opportunities and challenges for the living of our Charism of communion so that all may have Life." She concluded by wishing them a time of deepening their vocation as *Holy Family* Priest Associates, which is a gift to help them to collaborate with God's mission in the world.

She gave the two main objectives of the Session as:

- **To have a time of formation** when they would look at different themes and areas to help them to understand and deepen our common mission of communion and how to live it as Priest Associates of today
- **To work on Article 4 of Priest Associates' Statutes**

The morning ended with a meaningful Opening Prayer which connected the participants to the origins and roots of our Family, to our Founder and to the whole cosmos.

*“You are gathered today as Holy Family Priest Associates, coming from different countries, with all our diversity and richness. The ground we stand on is holy, because here we connect ourselves deeply with the breath, the life and spirit of our Founder. It indeed is a moment to celebrate the Sacred, in our connectedness.*

*We welcome this as a time to re-own the spirit that guided and animated our Founder - **the spirit of God Alone** which unites us as a family of diverse vocations, cultures and ministries thus enabling the growth of the church as Family. Convinced that the gift he received was for the world, he trusted the Spirit of God to continue the work, through the first members and those who were yet to come. Our evolving Holy Family story, within the Universe story, calls us today to keep the vision alive and relevant to our changing times, reflecting the radiance of Goodness and Love. “*



***Margaret Muldoon was the resource person for the next three and a half days.***

Margaret began the afternoon recalling the forthcoming celebration of our bi-centenary, and invited the participants to take this as a time of grace to rekindle the gift of God that is within us, to revitalise the living of our mission, according to the inspiration of the Spirit acting in the new insights of today; a time to seek together the calls and challenges of living this mission today.

**The Purpose for these days:**

- To grow in our awareness that if our faith, our share in the mission of Christ, our way of living and speaking, is to be meaningful today, it must be open to new insights and relate to its contemporary context,
- In the light of on-going revelation and evolution of our big cosmic story, to explore together new ways of expressing and sharing our Holy Family spirituality and mission.

- To recognise that any responses to our questions are open-ended and in a continuous evolving process; to explore together questions such as:
  - What understanding and insights are we being gifted with through the new discoveries of today?
  - How can we live and express our mission of communion in more meaningful ways for today?
  - In particular, what are the calls and insights that are important for the Priest Associates?

She encouraged the participants to welcome this moment as “an opportunity to have a different rhythm, to ‘come apart’ to enter into a contemplative space which will be an important preparation for the revision of the Statutes later.” The call was to enter into the process of these days with open minds and hearts, listening deeply to the Spirit speaking to all of us in new ways ... inviting us to be daring and creative for the sake of the mission of Christ.

The rest of the afternoon was an experience of contemplative looking and listening to the “**New Story**” of our Universe in a Power Point Presentation.

### Points that emerged in the feedback:

#### MUTUALITY..... RELATIONSHIP ..... RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL LIVING BEINGS

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- *A sense of oneness with nature– the spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi.*
- *Living in a world of selfishness, greed, exploitation – Christianity has a role to play – to bring about change.*
- *Marvel at the unfathomable care of God for creation and God in evolution.... awareness of interconnectedness... grateful for the creation of God and bring this awareness to people.*
- *With every break-through in the evolutionary process, **Life** begins anew – a long history of which we are a part.*
- *Realization that we are moving from the unknown to knowing, aware that science and religion are not in opposition but complementary*
- *Creation is a gift; hence respect for each living being who has its own place*
- *Recognition that the creation story in the Bible and the New story are different but that the latter brings more clarity to the former and explains it in a new way – a patient, meticulous, systematic development over billions of years.*
- *The self-giving of Jesus is always present – is needed for the continuation of the planet*
- *Hearing a call to live in solidarity and complementarity in view of communion.*

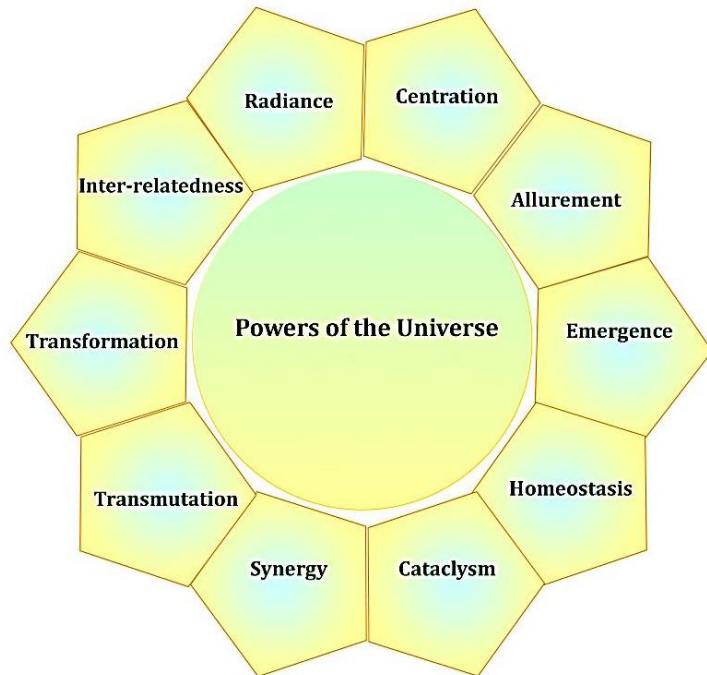
- *This also poses questions, challenges – Where and when did we lose the interdependent, inter-related dimension that was there in the beginning? How can we explain this story to others? Our draw-back as humans is that we are in a hurry, want to see results for our efforts – the need to learn from the process of nature – to give time to God!*

Margaret invited the participants to continue in the same spirit of prayer and contemplation of the unfolding story – which is One story, One Whole – seen in its different aspects. She encouraged the participants, saying that each one is at a different stage in this journey and to feel comfortable with wherever one is.

**Power point on The Three Principles of the Universe – Diversity, Interiority and Communion**

The feedback that followed expressed:

- great wonder and a sense of greatness at belonging to something bigger – the wealth and richness of God
- Trinitarian theology as the Dance of the Trinity – God existing only in relationship – we are in the depth of this mystery of love, trying to live priesthood as part of this great mystery
- Each child coming into this world is a gift of God – gift lived in loving, seeking and desiring God Alone in all things
- If the call in these Three Principles were realized by humanity, all differences – racial, ethnic, religious would vanish. If we destroy something, we destroy ourselves.



**The afternoon and the following morning were taken to reflect on the Powers of the Universe**

The Powers of the Universe speaks of Forces – ways the Universe functions and therefore the way God IS and how we are. All powers are at work together at the same time. These different manifestations of **Seamlessness** are called the powers of the Universe.

<b>Powers of the Universe</b>	<b>Universe</b>	<b>Jesus</b>	<b>Eucharist</b>
<b>Centration</b>	Refers to the way in which the Universe centres upon itself in order to give birth to a new being – which includes within itself all that went before it.	Jesus is a unique centration of the Divine Presence on Earth; he shares with humanity the fruits of this centration, offering a new vision of human life based on radical equality which he called the Kingdom of God.	The Eucharist is the sacramental presence of the Cosmic Christ, calling us to focus our attention on the Omni-Presence of Divine Wonder in all of creation.

<p><b>Allurement</b></p>	<p>This refers to the way in which the Universe holds itself together through an attraction that pervades the Universe on every level (gravity). It is a deep and powerful attractive energy that pervades all life, matter, space and time.</p>	<p>The human, in responding to allurement, is shaped and influenced by it and becomes open to new creativity and a new mutually enhancing relationship with Earth. In Jesus, it constantly drew people to him; even those who opposed him were drawn to do battle with him.</p>	<p>Eucharist is an invitation to enter into the mystery of Divine Allurement - opening our minds and hearts to the attraction of the God who permeates all of creation</p>
<p><b>Emergence</b></p>	<p>This cosmological power 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 unfolding Story of the Universe is an endless story of creativity. <i>The Universe is permeated with restlessness that we call God - a restless movement towards more.</i> Creative people tend to have a rhythm of their own. The tension and the restlessness in them provide the kind of chaos out of which creativity emerges.</p>	<p>Jesus was a creative, charismatic human being. A focused person, he followed his deepest intuitions regardless of the consequences. His fidelity to his vision cost him his life.</p>	<p>The Eucharist invites us to extend our understanding to include the crucified planet, annihilated species, vanishing habitats, polluted rivers, to encompass the whole of the Cosmos, <i>the sacrament of the Cosmic Christ.</i></p>
<p><b>Homeostasis</b></p>	<p>This refers to the way in which the Universe holds on to what is valuable, to protect and maintain what it has put a lot of energy into achieving. In humans Homeostasis shows up in their concern for preserving structures - to be protective of what has been achieved and tentative about what is new and untried, to have a deep drive for justice and a concern for the</p>	<p>In Jesus, Homeostasis is seen in the bringing of wholeness and healing to what has been damaged and wounded. Jesus expressed the essence of his mission in one short phrase <i>"I came that you may have life and have it to the full."</i></p>	<p>Eucharist – The Eucharistic bread is about that which sustains all of life – particularly life that is threatened.</p>

	<p>weak and unprotected. The danger is of becoming controlling - <i>"It was always done this way around here."</i></p>		
<b>Cataclysm</b>	<p>Cataclysm brings about disaster and destruction. It enables the process of death and rebirth – each loss is an opportunity for something new to arise. Cataclysmic humans are sensitive to the tensions of life and culture. They are the kind of people who are energized by conflict and upheaval.</p>	<p>Jesus was a powerful cataclysmic force. He challenged the unquestioned assumptions of both the political and the religious authorities of his world; gave people hope by inviting them into a new kind of Kingdom</p>	<p>The Eucharist celebrates chaos and brokenness. It enables us to enter into the chaos of life with hope, confidence and expectancy.</p>
<b>Synergy</b>	<p>Synergy is about being together in relationship in the Universe that enables survival/ endurance. It harnesses the efforts of individuals to create a co-operative, functioning whole – we are stronger together!</p> <p>In humans this is expressed in great optimism and strong intuition. The challenge is to choose relationship over isolation.</p>	<p>The new reign of God that Jesus set out to establish was to be built on mutually enhancing relationships of radical equality.</p>	<p>The Eucharist is a celebration of the bringing together of gifts for the whole community, for the good of all creation. The way of life in God's <b>Kingdom</b> is collaboration, relationship which builds a community of the Whole.</p>
<b>Transmutation</b>	<p>This cosmological power refers to the way in which the Universe calls for change at the individual level because of the larger context. (Brian Swimme) This is how the Universe works everywhere and always. In humans, self-awareness emerged as a result of Transmutation. They see the bigger picture – are prophetic figures.</p>	<p>Jesus observed the world and recognized the forces at work. <i><b>Fundamental to his dream was his deep conviction of the radical equality of all humans, and of the unity of all things.</b></i></p>	<p>A cosmic vision of Eucharist encourages us to articulate for to-day the meaning of the Jesus Story in the context of the world we live in – a withering world – to interpret "This is My Body" in a way that embraces the whole Universe in its vastness and complexity.</p>

<p><b>Transformation</b></p>	<p>This is the power of the Universe to transcend its current state in order to transform itself into something more complex. This power in the human expresses itself in an eagerness to enhance life, to make the world a better place, nurturing life wherever it is threatened.</p>	<p>Jesus' dream was that all people would experience life to the full. He wanted to transform the whole earth by empowering people to live to their full potential.</p>	<p>Eucharist is a celebration of Transformation. It invites us to be part of the Jesus movement to bring about a universal reign of peace and justice for all.</p>
<p><b>Inter-relatedness</b></p>	<p>This refers to CARE, which appeared in the universe with the emergence of life itself. Life and care are intimately related. Among the humans, care is not only an instinct; care is also the fruit of rational choice. It is the capacity to empathize, which shows itself in the deep desire to be in relationship.</p>	<p>Jesus was particularly concerned for those who could not defend themselves – the victims of a harsh and unjust society and invited them to enter into relationship with him.</p>	<p>Interrelatedness is at the heart of Eucharist. The bread itself is the union of many grains and is the symbol of all that sustains us; it is a gift of the Earth itself. The breaking and sharing of the bread is a concrete expression of our membership of the community of life.</p> <p>“Over every living thing which is to spring up, to grow, to flower, to ripen during this day say again the words: “This is my Body”. And over every death-force which waits in readiness to corrode, to wither, to cut down, speak again your commanding words which express the supreme mystery of faith: “This is my Blood.” - (Teilhard de Chardin, Mass of the World)</p>
<p><b>Radiance</b></p>	<p>Radiance is the primary language of the Universe. It speaks of Light and Gravity. The sun's radiance is the source of all life and vitality on Earth. In humans this is seen in a sense of their own authority. They are drawn towards a contemplative stance. We are empowered to produce our own radiance.</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>The Eucharist, as the sacrament of Divine Radiance, invites us to become Divine Radiance in our world, allowing Divine Presence to reverberate out from us.</p>



Insights from the reflection on the Powers of the Universe which touched the participants and which needs to be remembered and pondered on:

- We have all the powers within each one – the universe is our being - interwoven within
- Jesus followed his deepest instincts – regardless of consequences
- Jesus was a faith healer – focused on the neglected and stood for justice and radical equality
- Eucharist as the body of Christ embraces the whole of cosmos - Eucharist transcends and makes us new
- Awareness of a new way of being human brings liberation  
Interrelatedness is seen as three-fold – divine-human; human-human; **divine-human-universe**. This third dimension is a new learning and gives meaning to the web of life – ALL is communion
- The importance of collaboration/cooperation – together we are stronger
  - Jesus collaborated with everyone – so we are called to collaborate to build the Earth/ human life/the whole community of life. Our whole mission of communion is to build bridges, reach out to all; not to support what pulls us apart
- A new understanding of “**my neighbor**” as the one who needs me – if I’m not sought after, I need to go in search of the needy ones.
- Became aware of the sins against each power, specially synergy – against the harmony of the cosmos – we need total forgiveness in God’s eternal mercy
- We are called to a new and full communion – to be able to see the big context of LIFE; **to see the WHOLE** – the big vision of God; what I could do to further God’s vision where I am, to build bridges where there are conflicts, where there is division – to nurture and promote that which makes wholes and wholeness.

An enriching reflection on **Laudato si** helped the participants to go deeper into their understanding of our Mission – Communion.

Calls heard in relation to Laudato si

- To form together a Universal Family – One Family – as in the dream of the Founder
- The whole of creation is a manifestation of God – a Word of God that brings new life to the universe

- The cosmic approach focuses on the Risen Christ at work in the whole of creation because an ecological approach always becomes a sociological approach – Care for creation and care for our fellow human beings belong together in integral ecology. We are called to ecological conversion
- As humans, we need to find our identity and place in creation – this invites us to change our focus in our relationships
- Universal communion invites us into a fraternity of tenderness, compassion and concern for every creature of God. All creatures speak of God’s love; this demands: the nurturing of LIFE; respect for all: EQUALITY; THE question is – TO TRANSCEND BARRIERS – our comfort zones
- The different species of the Universe have an innate value in themselves - The Spirit of Life dwells in every Living CREATURE
- Creation speaks of the Trinity – there is a way of relating that sustains and gives life – we are prolongations of Trinitarian life – God uniting all creation – hence not to exploit but conserve; to be connected in a sublime way of love and respect
- We are aware of a new meaning and knowing of God – a new communion of all beings
- Universal communion includes the Whole.

A very moving sharing took place after a time of reflection on the spirit of God Alone, when each participant expressed his personal understanding and experience of this spirit.

- The spirit of God Alone teaches to be more sensitive to the realities of the world
- It calls for a paradigm shift – to recognize our identity as a community and in faith to be open to the new story of the universe
- The richness of a process of surrender – saying a fuller and deeper ‘yes’ to life
- It enriches one’s limited capacity to go beyond all boundaries – to accept and live circumstances in hope and trust
- Meeting God in all things, everyone, everywhere, every situation; contemplation is the energy to journey in all security – to be a leaven, to live communion
- Openness to newness and signs of the time, follow the Holy Family, living the values of zeal, availability
- In total surrender to God one find wholeness in self, others and all creation – as Priest Associates, learn to see God’s presence in all and have a great concern for all living beings
- The invitation to a human journey – love, seek, care and listen to the cry of Earth, the down-trodden, for God is present there. Caring for the universe is loving God

- Communion is understood as a singular irresistible valuing of “YOU” – building relationships, being sensitive to the stranded/needy and responding in love
- Choose unity, oneness, communion – avoiding division, separation and standing for justice
- In questioning the why of becoming a Priest Associate, see a gradual growth in understanding what it means – now it means embracing the whole universe – a significant leap – this understanding is still in process
- The challenge in pastoral ministry to be attentive to how one looks at/welcomes people; how one enters into their life struggles and bring them to prayer – see the need to let go of some structures that one is caught up in
- An experience of the very mystery of God, all is grace – called to abandon self; find God speaking in the Family
- Living this spirit to a heroic degree as the Founder wishes is not easy – needs courage and a paradigm shift to live communion – it is a process of surrender
- Gives freedom – in making decisions, overcoming blocks in life. To remain rooted in the spirit, the importance and the place of prayer and Eucharist in one’s life.

***This part of the reflection ended with a meaningful power point on the Dream of God.***

**From October 21 to 22, Winifreda Waslathantrige guided the group into reflection on the theme –**

**“To listen to and understand Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, the Priest, and his call to the Holy Family Priest Associates in today’s Church and world.”**

Introducing the theme she said that “we are entering familiar ground, but today seeing it in a new light, to listen and discern his call, making the gift of the Founder relevant for today.

The participants expressed their feelings as they began this day as – excited, happy, joyful, enthusiastic, longing, feeling one with, heavy, hopeful, curious, confident.

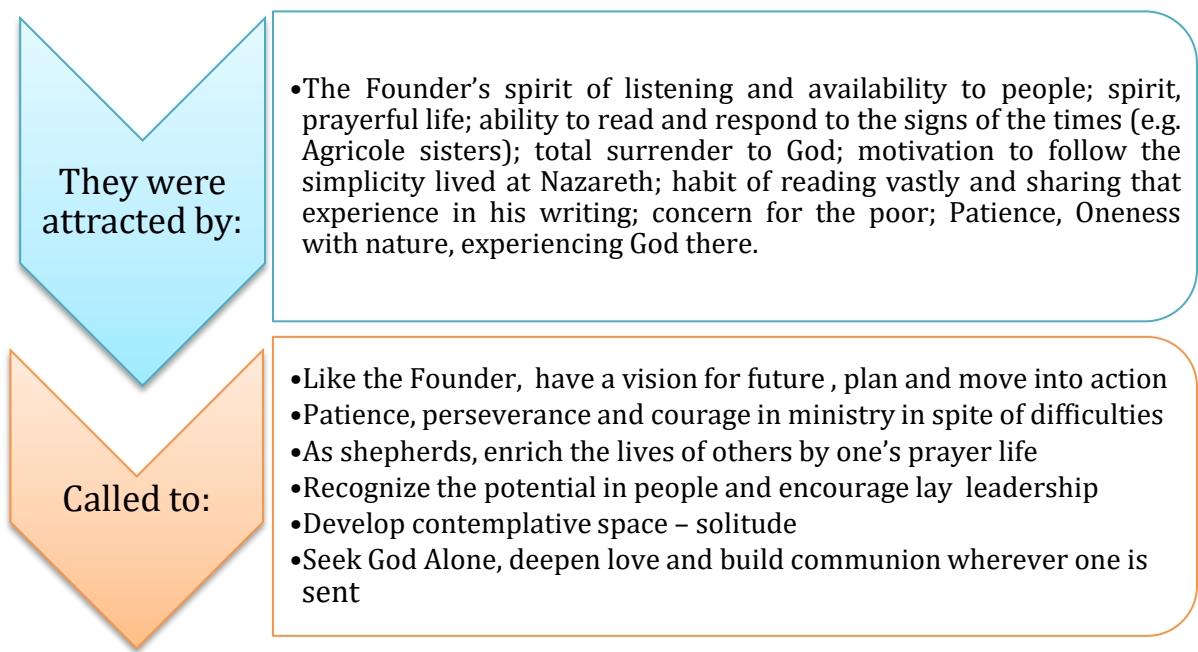
Based on “Movement of Grace” by Gail Worcelo SGM, Winifreda presented a power point developing the theme - “Change, Include and transcend.”

Later there was an exchange among the participants about their call to be Priest Associates. Certain aspects that were underlined in the sharing were:

- ✿ An overall feeling of being happy to be a Priest Associate and to belong to the *Holy Family*
- ✿ Call seen as grace – a call within a call
- ✿ A wonderful experience of being together, in deep sharing – gratitude for such interaction and open to the Spirit to move and bear fruit
- ✿ The persistent calling, the committed influence and accompaniment by the apostolic sisters, lay associates and also priest associates have nurtured their call
- ✿ Attracted by the simple, humble life of *Holy Family* sisters

- ✿ Value this vocation for giving the opportunity to make priestly life and ministry more meaningful and live it with great enthusiasm, zeal and purpose
- ✿ Understand the value of belonging to the Family
- ✿ Experience of the powerful/miraculous intercession of the Founder in different needs
- ✿ Sharing one another's experience gave new energy

The Power Point that followed on "The Cosmic Dimension in the life of the Founder" was very informative, inspiring and encouraging. It dealt with 4 aspects: Martillac, the Agricole Sisters, and Symbols from nature (used by the Founder to express deep spiritual issues) and his references to nature.



This led to a reflection and sharing on some aspects of Fr. Noailles's life that attract them as Priest Associates and how they would live them in daily life. After a time of prayer, the day began with a reflection and sharing on Fr. Noailles's letter written to Mother Conception Pérille on 15 February 1830.

**This revealed our Founder as:**

- a good formator – an intelligent, understanding, caring person who gives freedom to others to be used with maturity and responsibility and encouraging others to use all the resources available to achieve one's purpose
- one who formed adults to carry on the mission in a responsible way
- a straightforward person – encouraging others to dare, to risk in taking initiatives – even entrusting women with great responsibility which was rare at his time

- one who encourages not to miss opportunities – gives authority to act with the inner intuition and discernment – encouraging consultation in decision making
- a man of conviction and deep sense of justice
- one who does not control but is aware of the need to hold together – as a good leader, not allowing things to be let lose but offering fraternal suggestions
- a man open to novelty with great creativity
- one living an innovative way of leadership – sending people to other places where he himself could not be present – to live mission in freedom.



The third part of the reflection on “how to understand the Founder today,” led the participants to enter into their own contexts in the different countries, to listen to the calls addressed to them in their forward journey as Priest Associates.


### **Calls heard:**

- To be committed to the poor; to work for broken, disoriented families; accompany them
- To live a simple life – welcoming others, working for unity among all Christians, within the Church; to work in collaboration
- To recognize the value and place of women in church and society
- To invest in education, awareness-raising; working for migrants
- To be people of listening and availability
- To encourage inter-Faith dialogue
- To take lasting steps to eradicate evil – child abuse, drug addiction, male chauvinism
- To grow in ecological consciousness

*In a post- war situation where displacement, mass killing, disappearances – the scars of war – still remain even after 7 years since the cessation of war, they feel called:*

- To be agents of reconciliation, find ways and means of reconciliation, inter-religious dialogue

- To strengthen family bonds, giving special attention to the welfare of women-headed families
- To focus on the handicapped, the orphaned and youth
- To follow our Founder's life style in prayer, availability, detachment
- To move out of our comfort zones
- To raise people's awareness, through our example, so that they will protect and care for nature.

**23 October was an important day – a day of integration.** This was a time to gather the fruits of what was lived from 17 to 22 in view of moving towards the General Assembly. The participants had a longer time for personal reflection on the following points. 

A rich sharing took place at the Assembly in the afternoon, where the small groups presented to all their reflections.



### **New Learnings**

- God's boundless Love for the entire universe
- The ten powers of the universe are all connected and affect us.
- Moving forward with the new vision of the world means listening to the cry of the poor, to the groaning of the earth, bringing about reconciliation – promoting life and living in communion
- Everything in the universe is inter-connected – interdependent – human beings are part of the universe – only when the human beings realize their connectedness to the universe can they become new. One cannot remain in isolation.
- We need a paradigm shift to understand this new reality – a personal change of life, for the transformation of the world
- We have become conscious that we are in the process of unlearning and, as people of faith, we can open ourselves *to the unfolding of the new story*
- We are motivated to break the barriers – like fear and indifference and live the *new way of being human*. So the necessity to understand what a “*New way of being human*” means – our place in the whole community of life, the mutuality, the interrelatedness and the interdependence; the fact that one cannot exist without the other.

- Science and religion are complementary. The universe is a great gift of God to enjoy.
- God invites us to be co-creators – emergence. God saw creation as good, so did our Founder. We need to grasp this – a call as a Priest Associate. It takes creativity to implement this new understanding
- The call heard is a new and deeper understanding of one's identity as *Holy Family Priest Associates*; to have a vision for mission
- What is learnt and experienced about Pierre Bienvenu Noailles – some of his characteristics, especially the life of Prayer and his appreciation of nature - have strengthened to go forward in our Priestly life
- We draw energy from the Holy Family – from Bethlehem to Calvary – as the image of the Trinity and the self-emptying of the Trinity (Phil 2) – Love is the basis of everything.



Enjoying the "Martillac Walk"

### ASPECTS TO BE DEEPENED AND TAKEN FORWARD

- Imitate the example and virtues of the Holy Family – simplicity, detachment and communion
- The whole world is Eucharist – try to deepen our sense of Cosmic Eucharist. – need for a better understanding
- Deepen one's relationship with God and help people to do the same; bring all into prayer and worship
- Better communication with others priests, attentiveness to the needs of each one
- Building a spirit of communion – focus on mission, building relationships, concern for others, love
- The challenge of the Founder's life to change our lives and absorb, interiorize his spirituality and become more open and relevant to the signs of the time.
- The need for contemplation, solitude
- Assure greater responsibility and more cooperation for the care of the universe – participating in struggles for justice

- We can be enriched by new habits – reading, learning new things, initiating new activities – with a spirit received from the Holy Family and the Founder
- Deepen our understanding of – “dominion over” – in spite of the new understanding of uniqueness, diversity and communion – we still believe that human beings are of great importance
- The treasure we have discovered as Priest Associates, we need to share with others – how to help our brother priests to enjoy the experience we have had.

**24<sup>th</sup> - A FREE DAY** gave the participants a break, with space to refresh themselves before they entered into the next important stage.

**From October 25th to 28th, The General Assembly took place.** The process followed was personal reflection, small group sharing and feedback to the Assembly followed by a time of open, honest conversation.

Taking into account the preparatory work done by all the Priest Associates, the fruits of the integration day, they studied the development of article 4 and the guidelines for Formation given in the present Booklet for Priest Associates.

Explaining the history of formulating the 4<sup>th</sup> article Winifreda said that a first draft of this was drawn up at the Priest Associate meeting held in Sri Lanka in 2004, which was taken for further reflection in the General Assembly of 2007 which resulted in the present blue booklet - the development of article 4. This was done in view of drawing up the Statutes at a later date.

The group felt that at this moment they were trying to integrate the new reflections and inspirations received and hence needed time to process this before they arrived at writing the Statutes. The Drafting Committee and the International Coordinating Committee were entrusted with taking this work forward so that a final draft could be presented to the next General Assembly in 2020 for approval.

Considering the lived experience of the present International Coordinating Committee which functioned for the last 4 years, its future way of functioning was also discussed in detail.

On the evening of the 27th the new International Coordinating Committee was elected.

Jeanne-Louis DESPEAUX	(2 <sup>nd</sup> Term)	- Region: Europe and French-speaking Africa
Benedicto FURO	(2 <sup>nd</sup> Term)	- Region: Philippines and Pakistan
Benette Shantha FERNANDO	(1 <sup>st</sup> Term)	- Region: Sri Lanka
Servatius SOOSAI	(1 <sup>st</sup> Term)	- Region: India and English-speaking Africa



After a time of evaluation of the session, words of gratitude were expressed by Nicholas Jacob on behalf of the out-going Coordinating Committee and also by Servatius Soosai, a member of the newly appointed Coordinating Committee.

On the evening of the 28th bringing the 12-day session to a close, Ana Maria expressed her joy at the experience of the union of hearts and minds, collaboration and participation. Thanking each and every one who were directly involved and who had labored behind the scenes for the success of this session, she stated that with this ending a new phase begins. She said that all that was learned would impel the participants to bear fruit, living with greater radicality. She reminded them that everything is in process and that life goes on... In the face of present-day challenges she invited them to live connected to reality and to find relevant ways of transmitting our charism and spirituality in an up-to-date language without holding on to old ways. If we hold on to the old, we become irrelevant and create distances which make it difficult to discern the signs of times and hear the God of life speaking to us.

Our reason for being in this world is to be FAMILY and we are called to offer this gift to others. It is this that makes our presence meaningful today. United with all the other members of the Family and being aware that we are under the gaze of Jesus, Mary and Joseph and those who have gone before us, all the participants were urged to "Go Forward"!



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