1 God’s Greatest Miracle  Eudists General F. Camilo Bernal

2 And Dwelt Among Us!  Sr. Áurea Marques

3 Lucie is One of Us  Sr. Lucie Kabaze

4 On the Road to Damascus  Dima El Shaer  mission partner

5 Nurture your Future by Nature  Province of Central East India/Nepal

6 The Name of God is Mercy  Province of Great Britain

7 Partners in Mission  Province of South West India

8 Contemplative Sisters News  Province of South West India

9 Anti Trafficking Network  Sr. Caroline Price

10 GSIF International Workshop  Sr. Monique Tarabeh with GSIF

11 Levántate Mujer Foundation  Sr. Sandra Suárez

12 Mother Josefa Foundation  Sr. María Cristina

Good Shepherd News
While each unit is encouraged to send articles anytime during the year, we have planned that there are specific editions when each unit is asked to submit an article so that at the end of the year all the units have been part of Good Shepherd News.

Please send articles on or before the 5th of each month. Here is the suggested schedule:

January
Commissions, CLT, Bolivia/Chile, Indonesia

February
Argentina/Uruguay, Lebanon/Syria, Mexico Occidente, South Africa

March
Europe BFMM
Belgium/France/Magyarorszag, Netherlands, Mid-North America, Egypt/Sudan

April
Philippines, Portugal, Peru, Australia/Aoteroa-N. Zealand

May
Spain, Angola/Mozambique, Colombo Venezolana/Cuba

June
Central America, Mexico Norte, Northeast Asia

July
East Asia, West Africa, (Senegal-Burkina Faso) The Isles,

August
Italia/Malta, Singapore/Malaysia, Deutschland/Albania

September
New York, Canada, Ecuador, Kenya, England

October
Sudeste de America Latina, Sri Lanka/Pakistan, Central South US

November
Japan, Great Britain, O sterreich/Schweiz/Czech Rep

December
South West India/Central East India/Nepal, Ireland/Congo/Kenya
For John Eudes the Incarnation constitutes the basis for realizing the states and mysteries of Jesus. Without the Incarnation there would be no mystery of the holy infancy of Jesus, his cross, his Resurrection, nor his Heart. This underlines the centrality of the mystery of the Incarnation in Eudist spirituality.

Using theological language, very close to the academic, St John Eudes expresses the essence of the mystery of the Incarnation in this way: "Hypostatically united to the person of the Word, the holy humanity of the Savior, his condition as creature, is perfectly assumed into the perfections and even into the intimate life of God. For this reason, from the first moment of his existence, the holy soul of Jesus was enriched with sanctifying grace, which is, as St. Peter affirms: a participation in the divine nature, and the principle of a truly divine life, realized in man." (OC I, 10)

The great motive of his Incarnation, which is a manifestation of God's love for the world (cf. Jn 3 16), is oriented towards a very concrete perspective: the salvation of all. In turn, with a precise purpose that is to give glory to God: "He put his devotion in his immolation and sacrifice for the glory of his Father" (OC I, 266). The glory of God then becomes the main objective of this mystery.

Within the most genuine Eudist dynamism, the consideration of the mystery of the Incarnation finds an inseparable reference to the person of Mary, who represents the medium chosen by God for the realization of this mystery, as can be perceived in the following statement concerning Mary: "She gave a part of her virginal substance and her most pure blood to form the holy humanity of the Son of God. But not only this, she also cooperated with the Father, with the Son and with the Holy Spirit in the union that has been realized between his substance and the person of the Son of God. She thus cooperated in the realization of the mystery of the Incarnation, and therefore in the greatest mystery that God has ever done, will ever do, and even could do." (OC VIII, 215). Here is a statement that briefly expresses the importance of this mystery in St. John Eudes: "The Incarnation is the greatest mystery that God has ever done." Such an affirmation speaks for itself concerning the centrality that this mystery has in our spirituality and its radiance in the concrete life of every baptized person.

The thinking of St. John Eudes, which is deeply Christocentric, regards Jesus in his essential relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit which in turn reflects the Trinitarian structure of Jesus Christ and his spirituality. However, in considering the mystery of the Incarnation, the position given to Mary, in a very balanced way, is undeniably grounded, above all, in the unity and love between Jesus and Mary. "Don't you see that Mary is nothing, has nothing and cannot do anything, but Jesus, by and in Jesus; And that Jesus is everything, that he can do everything and that he does everything in Mary" (OC VI, 189).

Such a statement clearly indicates a fundamental theological postulate regarding the mystery of the Incarnation: the role of Mary in this mystery is simultaneously a mystery of Jesus and Mary. You remember the affection that St. John Eudes had for the statue of the Virgin Mother. It represents Mary as Queen, nursing her Son, and according to the saint, is one of the best expressions of the Incarnation: "It is a miracle to see two natures infinitely distant from each other, one divine the other human, united, so closely that they are one person! What a miracle to see the Incarnate Word come from the sacred womb of a Virgin, without affecting her integrity! " (OC VIII, 64).

In our practical life the mystery of the Incarnation takes very concrete form, starting with baptism, in which the believer is invited to be consciously transformed into another Jesus on earth in order to continue Jesus’ life and his works (OC I, 166). St Paul affirms this: "what is lacking in the suffering of Jesus Christ in his body which is the Church is completed in my flesh." (Col I, 21) and "I live, not I, but Christ lives in me." (Gal 2:20).

It is understood that our experience of the practical consequences of the biblical truth of the mystery of the Incarnation is found in the daily life of each baptized person: "When a Christian prays, he continues and completes the prayer that Jesus made on earth, when he works, it is the work of Jesus; when he converses with his neighbor in a spirit of charity, he continues and completes the conversational life of Jesus Christ ... and thus all other actions that are done in a Christian way." (OC I, 165 166).

We have the great blessing of having a spirituality of Incarnation, inseparable from the love of Mary reflected in our lived experience and everyday life. It is to be another Jesus on earth. Each baptized person becomes the presence of the mercy of God, because Jesus is the mercy of the Father: "The Eternal Father is called Father of mercies." (2 Cor 1: 3), because he is the Father of the Incarnate Word who is the same mercy (OC VIII, 52 and 62).
The work of creation was a marvelous manifestation of God’s love, affectionately creating humanity, in radiant harmony, perfect integration among all created beings, signs of the constant presence of God and of the fullness of God’s love! The harmonious coexistence was broken by the dimension of sin, from which arose divisions creating differences and intolerance in relationships, destroying the dream of the fullness of life.

In spite of this, God, in God’s tireless mercy, zealously cares for all creation and offers a suffering and tired humanity the opportunity of a new creation in “the marvel of God’s Word Incarnate! It’s God’s way of showing God’s love and assuring God’s presence in the reconstruction of the initial dream.

God assumes the human condition by way of the poor, without being ostentatious. On the contrary, in weakness and frailty, came the One who has the power of renewing the work created by God, light for humanity, a new creation!

The Word of God leads us to contemplate the reality of a fallen world and invites us to open our eyes and heart in order to insert ourselves in a new way among those who are poor, in the heart of humanity, to visit with love the situation of those who are desperate and suffering, strengthening our belief in a transformed world!

To be incarnated is to attend to the cries of the world in order to thwart the project of death and destruction, reinforced by those considered powerful in this world and supported by profit and intolerance, provoking all the disorders and crisis generated in “an ethic of care”!

The planet is dying, people and dreams are being destroyed, our rivers disappear in the name of developing resources that result in the accumulation of riches for the few. Our forests are being depleted until they die, and animals, although they survive, can no longer take refuge in their places of habitation.

We are called to be the presence of God for the persons on the margins and for the peoples that are below poverty level. This was the path proposed by the Word of God in showing whereby the project of the “New Creation begins!

We live the Incarnation of Jesus as a Word of Hope and Consolation feeling ourselves sent especially to marginalized women, victims of a “macho” society centered on power and riches. Only the Mystery of the Incarnation can lead us joyfully to encounter the people that are filled with Hope through our presence in their midst!

We recognize our fragility, our impotence before an oppressive system. We have the certainty that our tender God loves us and embraces all of us with God’s mercy. We feel the hope that the people who welcome us have, how our visits open their heart and how much joy exists in the midst of the poor! On entering their homes, on inviting them to begin their way of thinking and of acting, we feel that the mystery of Jesus’ Incarnation is happening! It is the beginning of the dream of a new creation because it is exactly the place that Jesus will make his Incarnation today! In what places of our world will the Word of God be incarnated?

He surely would be together with the refugees that live a political and religious persecution. He would make his Incarnation amidst the challenges of dangerous roads and improvised boats, risking his life in defense of so many lives! He would be present in the people’s demonstrations against corrupt politicians, the tyranny of economic power, and the restriction of rights for the poor of our world.

His Incarnation would happen in the most inhospitable places, where life is more threatened, in the midst of indigenous and black communities, preserving their culture, the cultivation of the land, the defense of reserves where life still exists. Certainly he would join the hundreds and thousands of children, abandoned children, women massacred by all kinds of violence, people of lost identity.

We need to wholeheartedly assume our commitment that flows from our Mission, filled with courage and hope in order to be the incarnation of Jesus in the challenges of humanity today! Let us remember our commitment and renew our way of thinking and of acting and let us run because the manipulation of the powerful, the children of darkness, is faster than we are but we cannot permit the oppressors to overcome us.

In times of so many social, economic, political and ethical crises, never lose hope in the face of this monster that tramples on the dreams of universal harmony, the new creation, in order to spoil them. Let us place in our hearts trust in God and the certainty that, organized in Networks, we can wipe all the tears from our eyes. Let us resist the tactics of the system and work in the building of harmony and respect and in the struggle for sustainability of the planet in which we live.

Let us be the presence of the merciful Love of the Father, renewing the grace of Reconciliation with our world. Contemplating the mystery of the Incarnation, we feel the strong call to embrace the pain of Humanity, making ourselves present in the defense of the impoverished and persecuted, in our mission of Justice promoting Peace. May our experience of the Incarnation of Jesus be above all, a joyful experience of profound Solidarity.
In 2001, when I said “Yes” to the Lord, “come, draw on the blank pages of my life,” I did not imagine such a drawing. Since that time my “Yes” has followed me because the Lord has unceasingly asked me to renew my “Yes.”

Syrian by birth, I have been in France for some twenty years and a French citizen for ten years. After choosing the Good Shepherd Congregation because of an attraction to its work with women and children, I wanted to return to my country to serve in this apostolate. Instead, my consecration sent me to Lyon to be with families and women from Iraq, Sudan, and other refugees in France. With them I discovered the same culture, the same language, and they said, “Lucie is one of us.” Together we travelled the same road of their Exodus and they wished to name their association “Good Shepherd.”

Seven years later, when I reflect on this mission today, I can only thank God for the gift of journeying with the women refugees and for all that has made us grow together.

When I arrived in Toulon in 2012, an Iraqi family welcomed me with open arms! In 2013, two Syrian families arrived in Toulon, fleeing the war in Aleppo, Mosul, and elsewhere. Since then, their numbers have been increasing and we have welcomed around 100 people of Syrian and Iraqi origin.

With the refugee families from my country, I feel an even greater commitment. Although I had wanted to return to Syria to be of help there, I had no choice but to answer the call, the urgent appeal to respond to this wave of refugees: to listen to them, accompany them, be their interpreter, find solutions, and help with administrative tasks, etc. Living in France for twenty years prepared me well for the important task of helping them feel at home and representing France in welcoming them. The Lord saw me as an instrument to be with and to serve his people.

In 2014, my own family arrived in France. We lost about a dozen people between Aleppo, Homs and in crossing the sea ... and it is not over yet. When they arrived, I was torn between the joy of seeing them alive and feeling angry because the war continued to uproot people. Yes, I was living and I still am feeling this inner conflict - , for what reason?

We work on our project as a community so that, together, we can respond in the best way possible to the tragedy knocking on our door. Furthermore, we are acting on Pope Francis’ appeal to be sensitive to the suffering of people torn from their land: “We must never forget that migrants, before being numbers, are people, faces, names, stories.” Our response is one of welcome. Risk, perseverance, abandonment to the divine will, and HOPE are all part of being a smoldering wick like Abraham, Joseph, and Mary.

It is Christ who is on the same path of tragedy that thousands of men, women, and children are subjected to in our day. With an open heart, may I welcome him, the Host, in the defenseless, undocumented refugee.
Pope Francis denounced the "cruelty" prevailing in Syria, where "so many parties are involved in the conflict, each bent on seeking its own interests and not the freedom and well being of the people." The Pope said, "Where there is no tenderness, there is cruelty and what is unfolding in Syria is a " workshop of cruelty." During the audience which took place November 17 at the Vatican Clementine Hall, a man from Aleppo, Syria, thanked the Pope for his encouragement and underlined the importance of the church's presence in the Arab Islamic world.

The Pope told his audience that a "revolution of compassion was needed in order to overcome hardening of hearts, especially in a world dominated by a culture of rejection." Being tender and close to the people means holding them, embracing them, and "not to be afraid of the flesh," the Pope said. God chose to become flesh through his Son so he could be even closer to humanity; the church, too, must be near the people and show this same love, this "tenderness of the Father."

Pope Francis pointed out that the people who are unwanted, exploited and victims of war are the flesh of Christ today. He warned that solutions cannot come from spirituality proposals that are too theoretical but from concrete gestures.

I have been working with the Good Shepherd Sisters for many years. It was my pleasure to meet the Sisters one Christmas Eve while we were conducting fun activities for Iraqi children (Jeunesse Mariale Vincentienne) who were being cared for by the Sisters. We dressed up as Santa Claus and gave the children Christmas gifts.

That day I asked a Sister about the congregation and its mission in Damascus. The Sister told me that they specialized in working with women in prison and those subjected to violence. I felt a great desire to participate in this humanitarian work. I started as a volunteer at the reception center then applied for a job and got it. Now I work as director of the shelter in Old Damascus.

In this article I will try to describe the various ministries of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd in Damascus, share my experience as a mission partner, and communicate how we live the apostolic dimension of our work.

The Sisters have been working in Old Damascus since 1982. They opened their house, the first shelter in Syria, and received people with great love, serving approximately 570 people from 1982 to 1995.

Today the shelter continues to offer free, confidential services to women, girls, and children who are victims of war, displacement, trafficking, or domestic violence. The goal is to protect them and work toward their reintegration into society.

In 1995 the sisters established Ebrahim Al Khalil Center to help victims of conflict through listening, support, and diversified relief services. They have served about 525,000 people.

In 1997 the Sisters started to support women and their children in Damascus prisons through a program designed to provide assistance, legal advice, and moral support.

In 2007, to respond to the needs of people affected by war, the Sisters established the Reception Center where two groups provide services in two different places. Their aim is to provide psychological and social support for men, women, and children through a variety of activities including movies, theatre, individual and group counseling. They have served approximately 6,504 people.

Another service at the Reception Center is the first hotline in Syria, which aims to provide free, confidential psychological, social, and legal support. The number of beneficiaries has reached 14,043.

As the ongoing conflict in Syria requires an urgent and
humanitarian rapid response, the Sisters started relief services in 2014 for affected families and have served 79,523 people.

I would like to tell you about a Muslim woman who came to us from desperate circumstances. She was wearing a long black jacket and veil that seemed to symbolize the darkness of her situation. She came to us with her two young daughters from an area of great conflict where people were fleeing from certain death. She was seeking safety for herself and her two daughters. From the beginning, our kindness and Christian approach amazed her because she had a different idea about us.

Gradually she began to change and take advantage of all the psychological support available to her. For example, she took off the black veil, replaced it with a white one, and started wearing ordinary clothes. She wanted to divorce her husband who mistreated her severely. Optimistic about the future, she decided to start her life over and the smile returned to her face. Subsequently, the woman attributed the positive changes in her life to the loving care of the Good Shepherd and his mother, the Virgin Mary.

I have tried to trace our history in Damascus which is not simply a success story of large numbers of people encountered and served. Rather, it is about the common faith of mission partners, sisters and lay. This mission bears fruit because the Shepherd's crook guides and cares for it.

What has been happening in my country for the past six years is something intolerable. Syria is suffering the worst inhumanity in the world, according to the United Nations.

In the midst of such a calamity, one has two choices: be patient, work, and wait for God's moment of deliverance; or, give in to despair and allow hopelessness to end life before being killed by a bullet. We, Syrians, try to live day by day, full of hope that Jesus Christ will save us.

From the house of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd in Damascus we send you our greetings and love. This house is very close to the Street Called Straight where St. Paul passed on his way to restored sight and new life. With St. Paul we have the feeling of new life after each day that we experience peace and survive the war. It's our cry of victory over the forces of death that surrounds us.

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**Nurture your Future by Nature**

By Srs. Arokiammal Selvanayagam, Lucy George, and Rachel Leela Arulda

Original article in English

We were three among the 41 Participants who had been attending a three months Intensive Program on Alternative system of medicine, in Hyderabad organised by CHAI (Catholic Health Association of India). We would like to share with you our insights and some of our new learning.

Having been trained in allopathic medicines at our St. Martha’s Hospital Bangalore, we hardly thought we would use alternative medicine in our healing ministry. We had been engaged in the health ministry at various village communities where we were faced with critical health issues and due to the lack of allopathic medicines at our clinics the patients were referred to larger city hospitals as we were unaware of alternative medicine then.

These hospitals centres and their treatments were expensive. This resulted either in loss of lives or prolonged, uncured sickness and suffering. This program has really awakened in us a quest for knowledge to learn the availability of medicinal plants that are supplied by mother earth in her creation. This will provide better medical access for people, especially the poor, and would cater to their needs as they will be easily accessible and affordable.

As we know, ‘Health is wealth.’ Certainly it is a divine gift. And our Congregational maxim is ‘one person is more precious than the whole world.’ Taking into consideration the value of life and the preciousness of health, this program will be of tremendous help for us to be more efficient in our ministry. Our approach towards the alternative system of medicine has enhanced the possibilities for better cure and we will ensure that whatever new learning and insights we have gained will be effectively exercised wherever we would be.

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Suffering and illness are inevitable in human life. During his life Christ often visited and healed the sick. He invites us today to bring all the sick before him and to pray for those who are ill and afflicted to turn to him for healing. Called to be His partners, we are entrusted not only with the task of healing the mind, body and spirit but with the task of political, social and economical healing as well.

Today, health has become a multi dimensional concept. Healing therefore is elaborate; ministries in which the practitioners usually seek to attend to the patient's physical
wellbeing, as well as his or her spiritual and psychological dimensions and at the same time try to integrate the person to the full membership of his or her society in which he or she lives.

Our lives which are filled with stress and tension have resulted in more psychosomatic illness. (Psycho meaning mind and somatic meaning body). Therefore the goal of a health care system should be to provide necessary holistic and affordable care to everybody and thereby to improve the mean level of health status. But nowadays it is health industry rather than health ministry which controls the medical care, with the emergence of many multispeciality hospitals run by various companies and individuals. Most of these hospitals are situated in the big cities where only the rich can benefit from the facilities due to the high cost. The cost of drugs is rapidly increasing and pharmaceutical companies are making huge profits by selling new products and because the decision making power is in the hands of prescribers and not on the buyers. Therefore, it is our responsibility to reach out to people who are neglected physically, mentally and psychologically and bring them to the main stream of life by providing an alternative system of medicine in our health ministry.

Why alternative System of medicine?

• As our Catholic Institutions are running in isolation there is no networking with other congregations who have Health Care centres.
• Most of the doctors are not willing to work in the Mission Hospitals since they are highly paid in the Corporate Hospitals.
• The Government had brought out the Clinical Establishment Act in 2013 where it says that the clinic should function only under the direction of a Medical Doctor. Due to this Act, the Health Centres in remote areas which were run by Sisters who are trained in Nursing were unable to continue their services.

Due to all the above mentioned points it was necessary to think about an alternative way of health service in these areas. We also noticed the allopathic system has had its devastating impact and increasingly people are becoming addicted to drugs which have many side effects. The traditional herbal medicines in turn are being forgotten and in order to reverse this process it was necessary to make information on the herbs and their healing qualities easily available to people. We also realised that the alternative system of medicine has various other benefits:

Alternative medicine and therapies are less expensive than conventional medical treatment and the poor people can afford them.

Many herbal medicines and other natural treatments like Naturopathy, Sujok, Colour Therapy, Seed Therapy, Acupuncture, Acupressure and Yoga cost less. Some aspects of alternative medicine also changed our outlook towards life. We tend to be more positive and optimistic with our approach in life; if we practice Yoga, Medita and Laughter Therapy we can get rid of stress, depression and other emotional traumas. It is highly effective and completely safe. There are no extra precautions needed, simple in application and easy to learn. Radiation treatments and allopathic medicines are known to have many side effects. For example in Chemotherapy the patient has loss of hair, loss of appetite, skin problems, etc., which affect the psychological well being of the individual. This may lead to more depression and deteriorating health. On the other hand if the person is treated with alternate systems of medicine (herbal, yoga, etc) we can avoid side effects and help them lead a better lifestyle by reducing their pain physically and psychologically.

Many doctors who prescribe a particular brand name or medicine combination are helping to promote that particular medicine or company; they do not prescribe generic medicines which are available at low cost. There are many duplicate medicines in the market which act just as a placebo but do not cure the illness. Instead, if naturopathy or ayurvedic treatment is followed there is no chance of duplication and there is zero side effect. For example, treatment for dengue with papaya leaf juice is effective. Turmeric used as an antiseptic is a good remedy.

Plans for the future:

When we complete the training by the end of October we will begin to implement what we have learnt here. The following are a few things we would start immediately:

• Visit and survey the villages on health needs and existing health services in that area.
• Create an awareness program on alternative medicine.
• Choose a few Health workers from different villages and provide training in alternative medicine.
• Have a small centre in the village community for physiotherapy, acupressure, and exercises. Have a few allopatric medicines for emergency.
• Identify herbal plants.
• Get in touch with Government medical officials for the supply of herbal seedlings.
• Encourage people to have a herbal garden in each village.
• Prepare herbal medicines for different diseases and so on.

Conclusion

Healing is indeed the Divine work that is entrusted to us on earth by God so that we may be an instrument to heal all the illness that the world suffers from and bring wholeness to the broken and pained world. Today many suffer, hunger, thirst and cry in isolation not for physical healing alone but for psychological, social and spiritual healing. They need our compassionate caring, nurturing, encouragement, empowering and consoling touch. We as nurses touch Jesus in the bodies of the sick, the poor, the elderly, infirm and the little children and bring fullness in their life through the alternative modalities of medicine.
Over the last few years the Good Shepherd Lay Partners in the UK have had a three day weekend retreat. Two years ago we decided that it would be good to use the talents of the lay partners and the Sisters who support us. The result was a resounding “Let’s do it this way again.” And so we did. The Coordinating Team had little difficulty in choosing the theme for the Retreat, it being the Year of Mercy and so the title of the retreat was “The Name of God is Mercy.”

We have three Sisters – Carmel, Nuala and Andrea on the Coordinating Team and Partners from three of our regional groups – Joan, Bernadette and Emily. Everyone on the team offered to prepare either a talk or prayers and music for the three days and we had a feast: thought provoking talks, moving prayers and reflective time, as well as music prepared by Jacqui and Sr. Carmel, all coordinated by Emily as she chaired the whole retreat.

As we gathered at the Retreat Centre in North Wales, we decided not to have a silent retreat as we felt it was important for us to get to know one another better as we have so few opportunities to meet as a big group. This helped us to have very open conversations in our small groups and in the whole group sessions.

Sixteen of us gathered in the Retreat Centre on Friday evening. After Joan had led us in the opening prayer, Sr. Carmel opened our session and our minds with a wonderful précis of the Papal Bull announcing the Year of Mercy. It gave us a superb insight into the intentions of Pope Francis in declaring the Year of Mercy and what it means for us personally as well as for our mission.

Our morning session on Saturday was led by Sr. Andrea, a great story teller with her own inimitable style. She had called her session “Through the Holy Door” and had prepared a ‘Holy Door’. Unfortunately the door did not survive the journey from Scotland so we had a Holy Arch instead, created from the flowers that would have adorned the door! It was well we had decided not to have a silent retreat as it made us all laugh a lot. Nonetheless it was a powerful symbol for us as we experienced processing through the arch of flowers and into the presence of God’s mercy and of one another in small groups where we shared our reflections. Later, the whole group shared our thoughts and hopes about the need for compassion in the world and within the Church.

For our evening session Bernadette had brought a leaflet that her diocese had prepared: “God’s Wounds of Mercy.” This used the story of Thomas and his refusal to believe without seeing Jesus’ hands and feet and she set us the task of reflecting in groups on this with a short questionnaire. Once again it was a very powerful and moving session, deepening our understanding of God’s mercy.

On Sunday morning Emily asked us to tell where we first met Good Shepherd. Much of what was said reflected the experience of warmth and caring that people felt in their first encounter. Patricia then introduced a reflection on shepherding and the overflowing nature of God’s love, using passages from John’s Gospel as well as the Good Shepherd psalm to help us see just how abundantly God gives his love and compassion and how we can reflect this in our own lives.

All the input and the sharing were surrounded by prayer led by members of the group and we concluded with an inspiring sending out session prepared by Joan after we had renewed our Commitment as Good Shepherd partners. We felt spiritually enriched and empowered by this experience.

We are already planning next year’s retreat, and maybe another pilgrimage to Angers.
Partners in Mission

‘Jesus has chosen you; he has made you partners in his mission to all peoples so that you may bear fruit.’ St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier

By Mr. Jason Furtado

At present, each province commission has a lay mission partner on the team. Events conducted by the Mission Partners (sisters and lay) are in line with the congregational vision and global solidarity.

2016 saw a clarity in the direction that partnership for mission was taking in the province of South West India. Each community was asked to select a local link person for partnership. The local link persons were trained at the first ‘Training the Trainers’ workshop in March 2016. The goal of the workshop was to allow the definition of ‘partnership in mission’ to emerge, to create a vision statement, and work towards that vision within the realities of local ministries.

A logo for partnership was designed to highlight the ever-evolving triskele of the apostolic, contemplative, and lay—lifestyles that move together, contributing their respective gifts to the mission which always lies in the center.

The workshop prepared this mission statement: ‘Working together, we nourish each other in equality & co-responsibility by reaching out, as life givers, to the least and the lost of this broken world with the charism of St. Mary Euphrasia.’

Formation was envisioned to be a structured, ongoing process of:
1. Awareness: knowledge of oneself, gifts, challenges and life vision mission.
2. Induction: introduction to Good Shepherd as a global need of the times.
3. Immersion: deepening of the Good Shepherd spiritually, heritage and legacy.
4. Emergence: with deep contemplation comes the realization of one’s part in God’s work.
5. Engagement: Energized by the spirit we risk together for mission.

In July 2016, the second workshop with the theme ‘Roots & Branches’ energized the local link persons to prepare the timeline for individual action plans for their communities. A talk by Ms. Theresa Symons (Asia Pacific MDO) and Jason Furtado (International Committee for Partnership) helped to link the workings of each community to the greater tapestry of congregational perspectives and goals.

Contemplative Sisters News

By Srs. Anges - Gracy Thomas

Once again we are here to share with you our experience of 2016. During this extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, we had an input by a Jesuit priest on the mercy of God followed by discussion in our community. We drew up some points to put into practice in our daily life and periodically we had an assessment.

In March we were very happy to welcome Sr. Jacinta Duong, an apostolic temporary professed sister from Vietnam who came to have an experience of our contemplative way of life. Sister was with us for ten days, including Holy Week, and had an enriching experience.

Sr. Mirian Colala, contemplative member of the congregational leadership team, came in April to attend the extraordinary Chapter of our Southwest India Province and stayed with us about ten days. Sister’s visit made all of us happy.

The decision of Pope Francis to raise the memorial of St. Mary Magdalen (“Apostle of the Apostles”) to a feast doubled our joy. We honored St. Mary Magdalene by singing the Morning Prayer composed by Sr. Mary Edith Olague of the New York Province. On May 23-25, 2016 a few of our sisters went for a pilgrimage to Kerala with Sr. Lissy Chaco, the first councilor of the Province Leadership Team.

They visited the tombs and remains of three saints (recently canonized St. Alphonsa, St. Euphrasia of Kerala, and St. Elias Kuriakose Chavara,) and the tombs of two blessed ones. They also entered through the Holy Doors of Mercy when they visited cathedrals. They were most happy and returned safely. The remaining ten of us and our province leader, Sr. Therese Meer, entered the Holy Doors in Bangalore. We entered one cathedral, one basilica, and one shrine. All of us were happy to enter through the Holy Doors and receive the Jubilee indulgence. We were blessed to have had a special spiritual preparation for this event.

On two occasions this year, we had the ringing of bells in our community: our dear Sr. Jacqueline Steel Woodward’s ‘Diamond Jubilee of first profession on July 22nd and our dear Sr. Tresina Padingarekkara’s Golden Jubilee of her first profession. Five priests concelebrated the Diamond Jubilee Mass and seven priests concelebrated the Golden Jubilee Mass. We were delighted to have with us our own apostolic sisters, family members, friends, and benefactors. Of course the celebrations ended up with a fellowship meal. The decorations inside and outside the chapel were artistically done and very attractive.

We thank and praise God for all the graces and blessings we have received during this year of mercy, and we strive to live the mystery of God in our lives. Praise be to God.
From 21 to 27 October 2016, 51 participants from 18 countries in Asia Pacific gathered at Maryridge, Tagaytay, Philippines, for a capacity building workshop on Anti Trafficking. While a smaller workshop had been held in 2011, since then almost all the countries of Asia Pacific where Good Shepherd is present, had become engaged directly or indirectly in anti trafficking work. The Asia Pacific Circle of Unit Leaders (APC) requested the workshop which was organised by the Asia Pacific Justice and Peace Core Team. The work began in late 2015 with a survey sent to all units, aimed at gathering information on the possible needs and areas requiring support and assistance. The Core Team worked with Sr. Clare Nolan, who facilitated the workshop, and Ms. Theresa Symons from the Asia Pacific Mission Development Office.

In bringing together representatives engaged in anti trafficking work the aims were to listen and learn from each other, encourage sharing of resources and work more effectively together. As a result a network was born!

The first part of the workshop focused on the “Four P’s” of anti trafficking:

Protection, Prosecution, Prevention and Partnership.

Speakers were drawn from across Asia Pacific which led to understanding the breadth of experience within our region: Ms Marietta Latonio of the Philippines, works with Good Shepherd Welcome House for trafficked women in Cebu, and has co written a book on the women’s experiences shared from her experiences on protection; Ms Willa Mowe of Malaysia, works with migrant and trafficked women, and spoke about prosecution and the issues involved in making sure the women are safe; Mr Bimol Bhetwal of Nepal spoke about prevention and emphasised the importance of a multi-pronged strategy of education and prevention; Ms. Theresa Symons spoke about partnership and the importance of Good Shepherd partnerships and also our partnerships with other like minded NGOs.

In the second part of the workshop, the participants gathered gained a regional overview of Trafficking in Asia Pacific and the importance of the Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP) of the US State Department. Input was presented by Clare Nolan and Theresa Symons. Participants were invited to become familiar with their country’s section of the TIP Report and this was a valuable exercise in understanding how governments respond and the importance of NGO input to the report.

One way of more effectively advocating for trafficked people, and lobbying for their rights is to have clear and effective documentation of their stories. Ms Kathy Landvogt, Head of the Women’s Research, Advocacy and Policy Centre (WRAP) of Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand, gave input on the importance of good practices for documentation, and what structures, policies and procedures facilitate effective documentation and advocacy.

On the second to last day, Clare Nolan led the group in a session called “Moving to Action”. Each unit worked on developing an Action Plan to take back to their unit that would use a human rights based approach to anti trafficking work.

As the workshop drew to a close, Clare led a session on “Visioning: An Anti Trafficking Network for Asia Pacific”. Working in small groups discussions, the participants identified a clear “vision” for the work of anti trafficking in their units, and in Asia Pacific. At the closing ritual, a participant from each unit read out the “Vision Statement”. A new network to combat trafficking in women and children was born! While the network is new and will take time to grow, the commitment to communicate and collaborate was strong and energetic!
The GSIF international Workshop
By Sr. Monique Tarabeh with GSIF
Original article in English

As mission partners (lay and sisters) we struggled to find ways to address the global issues. We identified the most pressing needs of today as poverty, human trafficking, forced migration, refugees, and gender inequality, violence toward women and children, and religious intolerance” (30th Congregational Chapter Direction Statement).

The Good Shepherd International Foundation (also known as the MDO Rome) organized an international workshop which took place at the Generalate in Rome on November 7-11, 2016. Forty one mission partners (lay and sisters) took part in the workshop to prepare its Strategic Plan for the next five years.

In those five days the room was full of energy, thanks to the participation of members of the Congregational Leadership Team (CLT), Board members of the Good Shepherd International Foundation, representatives of all Circles of Provincials, GSIJPO network, Spirituality Centre, Communications, and the regional MDO offices from Latin America and Asia Pacific, together with sisters and staff working in MDOs within the Units. The goal of the workshop was to develop a common vision, mission and objectives for the next five years of action of the Good Shepherd International Foundation (GSIF) and its local partners.

Prior to the workshop, the GSIF Team conducted a broad evaluation of its previous Plan (2014-2016) and a consultation in all the regions on the priority for the next five years. The results of the evaluation and consultation guided the reflection during the workshop. The thematic areas prioritized for the next five years are: poverty eradication, elimination of violence and all forms of discrimination against girls, women and children and anti trafficking and support to migrants.

Thanks to the support of Manuela Coletti, the facilitator, the group was able to elaborate a common vision and mission and identify objectives for the GSIF that will be further articulated in the following months to finalize the Strategic Plan. Following the CLT’s review, the Strategic Plan will be presented to the GSIF Board for approval in April 2017.

Once approved, the Plan will be shared with all Good Shepherd partners around the world by the GSIF Team, with the support of the CLT, the Board, the Rome Communications Office and the local MDOs who are committed to promote better understanding of the role of the GSIF and of the MDOs at local and international levels.

In addition to focusing on fundraising and capacity building, in continuity with the previous years, the GSIF will work together with the CLT, to design a more effective and clear governance system for the MDOs. One element that came out of the evaluation was a lack of clarity on the role of the MDOs and their relationship with the Rome office, with the Unit and Congregational leadership. One of the objectives of the new Plan for the GSIF will be to identify systems that can improve the coordination between the MDO partners and integration with the other congregational offices, as recommended by the 2015 Congregational Chapter. In the area of capacity building, the group affirmed the importance of developing adequate policies and standards to guarantee the best services to the girls, women, and children served by our programs worldwide.
The Levántate Mujer Foundation is a legal entity, constituted to advance the Mission of the Good Shepherd Congregation in Bolivia, which has been supporting vulnerable women and children in the cities of El Alto, Sucre, Oruro, Santa Cruz and La Paz for more than 20 years. Its apostolic mission is based on the institution’s values of:

**WELCOME – MERCY – JUSTICE.**

**Mission**
Our institution is concerned with defending the human rights of vulnerable and at risk women, adolescents and children, and promoting personal and social transformation, inspired by the thoughts, sentiments and affections of Jesus the Good Shepherd.

**Vision**
To see the human rights of women, adolescents and children restored, through the provision of welcome, protection, training, reintegration and networks, in order to promote personal and social transformation.

**Objective**
To dignify disadvantaged and at risk women, children, adolescents and families to enable them to take a leading role in their transformation and the building of a just and equal society.

**Programs:**
The Levántate Mujer Foundation takes action through the following programs: NO to violence in the family; Migrants; No to Trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation; Economic Justice; Holistic development of the child and adolescent.

**Specific Objectives**

**SLAVERY AND TRAFFICKING**
To reduce trauma and allow the child, adolescent and/or woman to be free from the physical, psychological and social effects of the abuse and exploitation suffered.

**INTRAFAMILIAL, SEXUAL VIOLENCE**
To reduce trauma and allow the woman, child, adolescent to be free from the physical, psychological and social effects of intrafamilial and sexual violence, through focusing on individual needs, prevention, impact and networks.

**HIV/AIDS**
To reduce trauma and improve the quality of life of the woman, child, adolescent affected by HIV/AIDS through focusing on individual needs, prevention, impact and networks.

**ECONOMIC JUSTICE**
To create and foster places that allow women and adolescents to acquire the tools to be able to earn a living. We have a network for the manufacture and sale of products that assists the women’s social and economic reintegration.

**REFUGE**
To provide a safe space for women and/or adolescent victims of slavery and trafficking, intrafamilial violence, sexual violence, and HIV/AIDS, through the provision of welcome, protection, and holistic care, in order to strengthen and facilitate the building of a new life.

**CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**
To provide a safe space for children and teenagers who live with or are affected by HIV, children of mothers in situations of prostitution, from impoverished families, who are abandoned, are victims of slavery and trafficking, as well as violence, in order to reduce trauma and allow them to be free from the physical, psychological and social effects through our holistic care centers, sponsorship, permanent home placement, family reintegration, among others.

The Foundation responds to this congregational commitment together with its local partners, both internal and external, and with the Good Shepherd Sisters of the Bolivia/Chile Congregational Province.
The Mother Josefa Foundation has been established by the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd in Chile to manage the Congregation’s mission.

Our mission is to welcome, support and empower vulnerable migrant women, children and adolescents, to facilitate their full integration into the country, the development of their families and their economic independence.

Our grassroots work centers in the cities of Iquique, Antofagasta, La Serena, Talca, Temuco and Santiago where our teams support, enable and advocate in the fields of migration, trafficking and abuse.

**Iquique and Antofagasta:** Women of Bolivia and Chile Unite Program. The project works with women who are mostly from Bolivia and Peru. The Foundation provides training in cookery, hairdressing, and workplace skills, as well as support and guidance through the process of regularizing status to enable access to health care, education and decent work. The women receive computer literacy training through the Telecenter to be able to keep in touch with their families.

**La Serena:** The Woman Family and Migrant Programs support around 145 people in the cities of La Serena and Coquimbo. Women who are victims of abuse and violence are offered counselling, which gives them the tools for empowerment and independence. The Migrants Program provides support to around 80 men and women, mostly from Haiti, in regularizing their status. They are offered Spanish classes and join networks to facilitate access to work.

**Talca:** Migrants and Families Welcome and Recognition Program in the Maule region. This program assists 270 migrants with regularizing their status, facilitating access to health care and education, and also offering them skills training, access to work pools and Spanish classes.

**Temuco:** The Domo Newen, Strong Women, Program in Mapudungún, was set up to support and preserve the culture of Mapuche women who migrate to the city. However, over time, the center has become a place of integration of Mapuche and Chilean cultures where both are welcomed and the women are empowered. Around 50 women are trained here in Mapuche silverwork and weaving workshops. Moreover, they have formed an artisans’ cooperative producing woolen goods and traditional jewelry for which they are seeking markets.

**Project Chalice:** The Mother Josefa Foundation manages a Canadian program which sponsors 1600 children in Santiago, Valparaíso, Talca and Constitución, as well as encouraging the personal development skills of migrant women and children and positive use of their free time with recreational activities.
Good Shepherd News

Thank you to the translators. and the proofreaders

Jesus has communicated himself, even to the point of taking flesh.
In Jesus of Nazareth we encounter the face of God, who came down from his heaven to immerse himself in the human world, in our world, and to teach “the art of living”...
I wish you a Christmas of life, Happiness and Peace.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year
Communications Office
Monique Tarabeh

Monique Tarabeh
Communications coordinator
Email: Com@gssweb.org
http://www.buonpastoreint.org/