When Sr. Leticia gave her opening message to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the first foundation in Chile and Latin America, the 70 plus participants of apostolic, contemplative sisters, and laity already were at home and excited about the days ahead. Accommodations were cared for; many of us had already experienced hospitality, meals, and Chilean wine at the provincial house. And we all had been regaled by traditional song and dance of Chilean folk groups!

Leticia warmly brought us to our serious purpose. She listed by name the women of the first courageous community that traveled from France to Chile – all future unknown; all comforts behind. And she told us why she named these women: to revive our zeal, and our love of liberty. She urged us to learn from these memories in order to create a new fidelity for our time that will shape our response in the 21st Century, in the 3rd millennium. Our job is to establish a culture of life, to be life-bearers. She noted how important our unity is, as persons sharing the Good Shepherd spirit, within a world so divided and fractured. Our precious days together would strengthen this unity and bind us together for the mission that confronts us now – all future unknown.

Each country presented a history of their own founding, repeating courageous stories of daring sisters, generous benefactors and dedicated co-workers in building a chain of compassionate service throughout Latin America. Each history had its own texture and cultural shape, but each was also very, very familiar simply as an aspect of our congregation’s story. (Each participant received a CD of all PowerPoint presentations and other documents of the activities of the forum - a gift from Chile!)

The seminar tempo did not slow down once the historical accounts were shared! Each country and province next presented a current apostolic endeavor to display the life, spirit and creativity befitting Mary Euphrasia and her mission. One could begin to wonder what forms apostolic projects will take when presented 10 years or 20 years from the present moment, as we now re-structure and re-shape our work to today’s global needs and stronger networking.

Then we listened and dialogued about realities we now face, from the perspective of the church, from the perspective of women in Latin American society, from the perspective of those who are marginalized and from the perspective of our congregational directions and Latin America realities. Entwined in all the conferences were rich liturgies and celebrations expressing the empowerment of women, recalling the martyrs we have seen in our lives, and demonstrating the varied cultures of the continent. We found ourselves both nurtured and pushed toward deeper
prophetic actions, toward needed changes and trust in God to end any fears.

Indeed we had entered another reality for a few days; we even made a pilgrimage to the founding house in Chile. But before we knew it, the time drew to a close and the excitement of new and renewed friendships turned in to good byes and hopes for speedy reunions. Between the farewell prayers, dances, and packing were repeated expressions of gratitude. May that gratitude be transformed into prophetic and fearless action on behalf of reconciliation and compassion in the 3rd Millennium.

**Words and commitments:**
**From seminar to reality**

The closing of the seminar called us to consider God's dreams for us and to rely on God's mercy in our work of conversion. What better way to go into the future! We had already, in our group work, described ourselves as women who are involved in the struggle for Human Rights. The assembly turned their desires into a declaration that expressed these commitments:

The final paper can serve as a reminder of the lights and visions of the seminar. The document can enfold past history and the history we are now creating into radical desires shaped by zeal. The declaration acknowledged that our legacy must be lived in the socio-economic-political context of today, so as to provide real expressions of mercy to the cries of the poor in Latin America and throughout the world.

A recommitment to formation at all levels was made; formation was defined as a necessary component if we are to assume active roles in the leadership needed for service today. The networking we talked so much about was also affirmed, both on the international level through the NGO office but, more importantly, through creating networks continentally throughout Latin America. What will this look like? Lastly, the need to know the political and legal aspects of women's and girls' human rights was affirmed so that Good Shepherd can take its place in the Women's movement and contribute in regional activities and regional preparations for international participation.

Such actions are bold and can be overwhelming. So the final commitment was to dispose all into the hands of our Mother in the Spirit, Mary, and our founders in the congregation, John Eudes and Mary Euphrasia.

To me, as a visitor to Latin America, a few words stood out for continued reflection beyond the seminar. Significant words that carried so many concepts were: "radical," "prophetic," "audacious," and perhaps most profoundly, "mysticism." I think it is adherence to these words, more than declarations of commitments that may really carry Good Shepherd into new responses. Continued contemplation and interpretation of these words can give the impetus for continued conversion and transformation. Undoubtedly, communal prayer with such words can serve the development of Latin America and throughout our beloved congregation.

Go and bear much fruit.

Love never says enough.

♥♥ ♥♥
Learning Justice in Rome
by Shalini Podimattam

“It takes courage to answer a call.” These words from a familiar hymn express the deep confidence in God required as I take on the responsibility of directing the Good Shepherd JPSM Office. I have seen with appreciation how Caroline Price made remarkable contributions to the larger network of Justice work in Rome. I am now picking up those links, exploring them, connecting them, and finding meaning in order to move in the direction of our Chapter decisions.

In the first weeks I studied files, made larger network contacts and attended meetings of the JP Network in Rome. I wish to share with you about some of the networks in Rome.

♥ The Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Promoters Network was started at the end of the 1980s, initiated by General Councilors of various congregations who arrived in Rome with Justice backgrounds. They promoted justice and peace at the inter-congregational level. The network has a membership of about 70 men and women, including General Leaders and full time Justice Peace persons.

The group is independent, flexible and informal in their functioning. They have organized retreats and workshops as well as written publications. Among their publications are The Manuel for JPIC Promoters and Water for Life, in Defense of our Sister Water.

(see: http://ofm-jpic.org/aqua/)

There are also working groups on the Rights of Children and Spirituality. A new group is working on Reconciliation in collaboration with Pax Christi International.

♥ The Justice Peace and the Integrity of Creation of the Union of Superior Generals (JPIC of the USG/UISG) is a more formal organization. It has a working group for trafficking in persons especially women and children. This group produced an “Information Kit on Trafficking” in 2003. The group organizes public seminars and is composed of 8 General Leaders and 8 JPIC promoters.

♥ The Africa Europe Faith Justice Network (AEFIN) started 20 years ago with about fifty European-based Congregations with Sisters working in Africa. It has an office in Belgium. Its goal is to address the unjust economic systems related to Africa; it works on such issues as Water and AIDS.

♥ The Documentation Study and Research Center (SEDOS) is a twenty-year old information group for missionary congregations. One hundred two Congregations are counted as members. Among its significant work have been efforts on International Debt Cancellation.

From experience, I see that these networks thrive only on involvement that connects with and ripples out to the reality of the larger community. The initiatives taken by core groups need to find meaning in the reality of local projects and wider groups to be practical for the poor with whom we stand. That is the challenge of networking, be it in religious or human rights groups. It is the challenge before you and me in service of the mission.

My early participation in network affiliation has given me a sense of confidence. I remember seeing an Italian proverb that says: “For a web begun, God sends the thread” ♥♥
In the NGO Office, a special experience....

By Hiam Baroud, GS NGO intern

Being an intern at the GS NGO office at the UN in New York is an opportunity for me to live a special experience.

It’s a time to learn and to explore, and it gives me an understanding of how our congregation, which is an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the United Nations, is working for justice and promoting the rights of women and children who are exploited all over the world.

I have noticed that our Congregation is not the only group to work this way. Many NGOs and organizations are also doing much good work to promote women and girls in many ways. This has caused me to ask questions. How can we connect with other organizations and networks to expand our efforts?

The most important events that we have followed at the UN have been the Commission on Social Development, The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW.) They were each an opportunity to experience internationality in many dimensions. I saw so many efforts made throughout the world to promote gender rights and rights of all who are victims of violence and discrimination.

During the CSW (two weeks in March) I had the opportunity to meet courageous women – over three thousand came to NY from all parts of the world, many in colorful traditional dress. These women were active in working for structural changes. Their work passed from regional, to national, to the international level. With so many active and dedicated women, I felt that sometimes our Congregation is shy and slow to take up the systemic and structural work that our Chapters have encouraged, especially on national and regional levels.

I hear my questions as a call to be open to the reality of our world and work for more collaboration. Alone, we are not able to do everything. We cannot continue to say that working with girls and women is only our own special work. So many NGOs in different countries are doing so much. We must join them and invite them to join us.

In a recent report on UN reform, In Larger Freedom, Secretary General Kofi Annan insists on the urgency of collective and cooperative work between States to achieve development, security and human rights for all. To achieve the world's goals, as stated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we have to use our strengths and work to change structures that cultivate injustice and discrimination of the poorest. As an international congregation, connections at the regional, national and international levels are indispensable. I think we have to learn this lesson quickly and make necessary changes.

Let’s keep our hearts and minds open to insert ourselves in the reality of our world and to hear the voice of the poor.

Resources:

CSW: un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/49sess.htm

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals

In Larger Freedom: http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/
Good Shepherd participates strongly each year in the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). As a GS intern at the NGO office, I was happy to be here now, when the UN commemorated 10 years after the Beijing World Conference on Women. Also, in September this year, the UN will have a five-year review of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which all nations agreed to in year 2000. They are very relevant to our GS mission, particularly the eradication of poverty and gender equality.

As an intern, I was amazed to see thousands of women from all over the world come to New York to the United Nations to participate fully at the Sessions of the CSW. Some of them came with no English at all, especially the indigenous. I heard all languages spoken, including sign language. But language limitations did not discourage them - they had the dignity to share and to fight with a strong spirit, to create justice and peace, to build solidarity and show love within all God's creation. I saw that women are strong in their togetherness. Most of the women have high education levels but they work very simply and humbly in groups and committees.

As I enjoyed this gathering, I tried, as a Good Shepherd, to listen with my heart and be attentive to those in need of help. I am still new in New York but these women just arrived and some with no English language! I experienced this with various indigenous, with those who spoke to me in Mandarin, Japanese, Tagalog, and others. In our common work we experience that all of us are sisters from the same God; we awakened each other to fight with the same spirit for what is right for all women and girls in this world. Everywhere women try to empower their sisters, to reject trafficking of women and girls - all are trying to save souls.

I tried my best to experience the different events of the CSW: an NGO Consultation Day to orient NGOs; daily briefings to keep updated on the many activities occurring at the same time; plenary sessions of governments stating their positions; round tables for discussion; caucuses to focus regional concerns or special themes such as violence against women; breakout sessions for brainstorming; side events and workshops for learning; preparing and attending a special reception to welcome the new Rapporteur on the Trafficking of Women. I also tried to follow topics from different regional perspectives: Europe, Africa, Asia, US. I saw that all regions have the same aim: "No" to the trafficking of women; "Yes" to eradication of poverty and human rights empowerment for women.

In such a massive and international meeting with so many facets, I had to ask: "What can the Good Shepherd sisters do in this century?" I am convinced that openness is very important in networking with other NGOs. I see how many NGOs provide the same services as Good Shepherd but more professionally and in wider ranges of networking. We are strong when we fight together especially if we want to change systems, as we have been called to do. We can start in our own country or region, and expand throughout the world, using structures such as the UN. We embrace the world together with the other NGOs; we support our representatives at the UN. Our experiences and expertise
and relationships with people can encourage others to continue creating peace, fighting for justice and building solidarity in empowering women and girls, our sisters in this world.

We develop and strengthen networks in order to realize our objectives of formation, justice and peace, solidarity, sharing of our resources and dialogue at all levels. Make use of our NGO status and our internationality…

28th General Chapter, Good Shepherd Sisters

♥♥♥♥

Where is Good Shepherd voice in the Women’s movement?

Women Have Always Held up Half the Sky - but struggle throughout history for personal identity beyond property, slave or sexual objects. The modern Western industrial revolution and suffrage movements brought much momentum for women’s civil and legal rights.

1975 Mexico City, First World Conference on Women — A Plan for Action The Participation of 100 nations recognized the actual potential and ideal status of women in society.


1980 Copenhagen, Second World Conference on Women - Copenhagen interpreted equality to broad rights, responsibilities and opportunities, and women as agents of change.

1985 Nairobi, Third World Conference on Women - Nairobi was more inclusive of the Global South.

1990 5-Year Review of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies (NFLS)

1995 Beijing, Fourth World Conference on Women - 40,000 women from all over the world participated, providing voice and visibility to the political power of women, and creating the Beijing Platform for action (BPfA)

2000 Beijing plus Five (B+5) – Special Session of the General Assembly (SSGA) - The conference identified new obstacles and challenges, strengthening the Platform.

2005 It's in our hands - The future is now!!

♥♥♥♥

Know your NGO office!

GS NGO statements on Violence against Women, Prostitution and Trafficking, Water, Gender Equality, and Indigenous are now official UN documents (in the 6 UN languages.) They can be found on the international GS website:

http://www.buonpastoreint.org/anglais/a_justice_ngostatements.htm

In the course of history there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other.

Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize recipient
Water for Life  
Decade 2005 - 2015

Water is essential for life... This is an urgent matter of human development, and human dignity... We need to free women and girls from the daily chore of hauling water, often over great distances. We must involve them in decision-making on water management. We need to make sanitation a priority. This is where progress is lagging most... Kofi Annan March 2005

We wish to integrate justice, peace and the integrity of all creation in our life and mission. 2003 GS General Assembly Direction

For information and resources:
http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/

Facts for contemplation

About 90 million women are living outside their countries of origin. Most of them are at risk of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation. As labor migrants, family migrants, trafficked persons, or refugees, they face the triple burden of being female, foreign and, often, working in dangerous conditions. They also face ethnic and religious discrimination. At no time in human history have as many women been on the move as today.

Taken from UN report on Women and Development, December 2004

Brief Notes-Around the World

From Damascus Syria, sent by Sr Claude:


Congratulations to GS Syria in this important national presence.

From Senegal:

We rejoice with our Sisters in Senegal who saw the suppression of the death penalty in 2004. Surely this national action, in keeping with Life-bearing for the poor, can encourage us to work against the death penalty in any countries where it remains legal.

Also in Senegal, the sisters participated in a symposium (Dec. 2004) to look at new methods for clinics dealing with street

Good Shepherd Voice for Justice

Many thanks to Senegal and Ethiopia who sent requested contributions to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Children for his report to the Secretary General. Your contribution will raise Good Shepherd’s voice and help to change the structures that are unjust to children.

Nine Good Shepherd programs across the continents contributed to the NGO report, Ten Years after Beijing: Still more promises than Progress. It was distributed to governments and NGOs at the March 10 year review of Beijing conference, Commission on the Status of Women (CSW.)

Thanks so much.
children, exiles, those without shelter and those exploited. The sisters shared experiences and supported renewal and change. They joined workshops on prostitution, family therapy and children in difficulty.

**From Cali, Colombia, Committee for Justice and Peace, Hna. Luz Aleyda:**
Among their activities to promote women, Good Shepherd marched with the slogan "No More Children for War" on the International Day for No More Violence Against Women. They have stood with girls and women in legal court cases of sexual abuse and are networking with Women's NGO groups to extend their reach of activities that support women.

**From Angers, Sr. Christine Mearns:**
In Angers, the sisters have taken the prayer notes from the Good Shepherd NGO prayer network and have submitted them to their diocesan web site for inclusion. This amplifies the prayer of Good Shepherd for justice and peace and links the activities of the NGO office to a broader level. See more: [http://catholique-angers.cef.fr/site/182.html](http://catholique-angers.cef.fr/site/182.html)

**From Indonesia, excerpted from a report of the Justice Peace meeting, contributed by Luciana:**
Forty-three sisters and lay associates participated in a weekend session: “Life Bearers with and for the Poor.” Along with guided personal reflection, a member of the Indonesian Women's Rights National Commission spoke about the situation of women in Indonesia and linkages between people and government. Summary remarks highlighted the need to increase networking with other NGOs as well as to keep updated about relevant information.

**From Canada, Deborah Zanke, Development Coordinator, Marymound:**
The Good Shepherd Agency in Winnipeg initiated The Media Awareness Initiative about Sexually Exploited Youth (MAISEY.) The project, a coalition of many agencies, educates and sensitizes public media about language usage and sexually exploited youth. It has a goal to change labels such as "prostitute" to "sexually exploited youth." It also seeks to see a change from the term "client" to "abuser" or "alleged perpetrator." Details of this systems approach go to: [http://marymound.com/events_MAISEY.htm](http://marymound.com/events_MAISEY.htm).

**From India:**
The Indian province is hosting 4 days of leadership-at-all-levels training for sisters between the ages of 30-50. They also have a sister enrolled in a post-graduate program for Human Rights studies.

**From the Philippines, sent by JP team:**
GS Philippines participated in a National Church People’s Conference on Mining. Biblical reflection is the base of the national struggle for justice for land and resources. The prayer stated: Protecting and defending our land is a deeply spiritual act… concern for our environment brings us into contact with the earth - its relationships, structures and systems. …we begin to see people’s problems, hopes and aspirations… we become involved. This directs us to work to change conditions that threaten life.

♥♥ ♥♥

News notes prepared by Congregation of the Good Shepherd See this newsletter on the website at: [http://www.buonpastoreint.org/index.htm](http://www.buonpastoreint.org/index.htm)

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Please distribute to all communities and Good Shepherd Persons in your province. Thank you.

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