Women, Solidarity and Celebration

Sisters and staff gather for the World Day of Prayer at the Good Shepherd Generalate. Among those who participated in the prayer were sisters from various congregations and the lay staff of the Good Shepherd Generalate. Sr. Bernadette Howes of the Missionary Franciscans of the Immaculate Conception led the prayers prepared by the women of Papua New Guinea. Photo at right shows Sr. Ana Maria Quiroz RGS, Bernadette MFIC and Pilar Martinez RGS with the traditional instruments from Papua New Guinea. The MFIC has missions in the country.

Women’s World Day of Prayer

Sisters from various religious congregations celebrated Women’s World Day of Prayer last March 5 at the Good Shepherd Generalate. They were in solidarity with more than three million women who celebrated the occasion in different parts of the world.

This year’s prayer, prepared by the Christian women of Papua New Guinea, was led by the Missionary Franciscans of the Immaculate Conception, one of the congregations that hold its Generalate at Via Raffaello Sardiello 20. The Franciscans have missions in Papua New Guinea.

The theme of the prayers was, “In Christ there are many members yet one body.”

In spite of gender inequality, women in Papua New Guinea are beginning to take their place in professions previously closed to them. There are now women who are pilots, engineers, doctors, lawyers, judges and lecturers. “In this way, they make a very positive contribution to their nation.”

The symbol chosen for the 2009 Women’s World Day of Prayer comprises the Cross and a bilum. Bilums are hand-woven.

(Continued on page 2)
string bags, which are widely used among Papua New Guinean societies.

During the prayers, Sr. Pilar Martinez RGS explained to those gathered, that bilums are very strong and are used to carry everything from food to a baby (who can see out through the holes in the bag!). Sometimes a bilum is suspended on the branch of a tree and becomes a cradle for a sleeping baby. Men also use bilums to carry heavy loads. Where cultures are so diverse, this simple string bag is common to many.

By placing the bilum on the cross in this symbol, the women of PNG seek a unity where they are not merely held together as though they were gathered into a string bag. They seek a vibrant unity where love is genuine, and where the many, many communities of Papua New Guinea are of one heart and soul.”

Among those who attended the afternoon prayers besides the MFIC and Good Shepherd Sisters were the Sisters of the Holy Family of Bordeaux (HFB), the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) and the lay staff at the Generalate. Participants also donated money for the projects for women in Papua New Guinea.

For the past years, the Good Shepherd Sisters at the Generalate, have been organizing the prayers and inviting the sisters from the various congregations in the neighborhood.

Sr. Roswitha Wanke of Germany, coordinator of the Generalate from 2001-2004, initiated the celebrations at the Generalate. The Province of Germany sends prayer booklets and other materials for the celebrations each year. (RK)

God of oneness and unity

“In Papua New Guinea we are many and we are diverse. Our 800 languages represent as many cultures and traditions. Our rugged landscape can isolate us from one another but the love of God empowers us to embrace one another and to embrace you, our brothers and sisters around the world.”

Loving and merciful God, God of oneness and unity, though we have different cultures, languages, colours and traditions, we are one in your Spirit. Thank you for opening our inner hearts to see the Lord Jesus Christ as the one who has united us. Though we are many members, in Christ we are one body.

Let us go forth, empowered to make a difference so that people around the world will see and feel the oneness of Christ in this broken world, and be compelled to draw closer to God. May the source of oneness and unity bind us together with his endless love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(From the World Day of Prayer written by Christian women from Papua New Guinea)

In this issue:

Women in the world

The Women’s World Day of Prayer held on March 5 drew in us a greater awareness of and solidarity with the plight of women worldwide. That the prayers were prepared by the Christian women in Papua New Guinea, and facilitated by the Missionary Franciscans of the Immaculate Conception (MFIC) that has missions in the country highlighted, too, the richness of charisms present in the Church.

So, in this edition, that recalls the first International Women’s Day, Good Shepherd News publishes articles on how global solidarity is forged in various countries, and particularly in responding to an appeal for prayers for the victims of the bushfires in Australia, the programs for women and children in India/ Nepal and Ecuador. It also pays tribute to sisters whose generous offering of themselves and their gifts changed the lives of women and provided them with better opportunities in life.

St. Mary Euphrasia, whose zeal to better serve women by dreaming of a Generalate, nurtured friendships with women who shared her vision and labored to pursue it.

There is also an article on the arrival of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity to Raffaello Sardiello, 20, to be the fourth congregation to live in the same address as the Good Shepherd Sisters, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and the Missionary Franciscans of the Immaculate Conception. All live a charism that highlights an aspect of Jesus and his ministry. Intercongregational community living is both a richness and a challenge.
**Victorian bushfires and global solidarity**

Bells sounded in Melbourne on Sunday 22 February to mark a National Day of Mourning remembering at least 209 people known to have died at the hand of Black Saturday, February 7 in Victorian Bushfires.

Tens of thousands gathered in Melbourne, including hundreds of bushfire survivors, political leaders, religious leaders, Princess Anne and other dignitaries. Speakers at the central memorial service spoke in solidarity with all those affected by the bushfires whose stories are truly heart wrenching. Aboriginal leader Auntie Joy Murphy officially welcomed everyone to the land of the Wurundjeri people. She went on to say; "The terrible loss of so many human lives, animals and homes is extremely difficult to comprehend and accept, to believe what has happened …The spirit of the land will reclaim itself and the bush animals and the pets will return, this is nature's way”

Yes, these have been really difficult days for all Victorians, days of fear, of pain and now of haunting sadness. Not only families and friends suffered loss, entire communities have been devastated by these fires. On that day we saw the enormous power of nature, and as a consequence we saw the best of humanity as people rallied to help.

We would like you to know that despite the scale of loss, the physical and mental impact that these bushfires have had and are still having on Victoria, on its individuals and towns, the people have responded with amazing resilience, ingenuity, courage, good will, generosity and selflessness.

We invite you to type the following web address into your web browser on your computer. It contains pictures associated with the Victorian Bushfires.


To all of you who have held us in your hearts and sent condolences, thoughts and prayers, we say thank you,

**Annie Forrest**
Manager of Good Shepherd Life and Vision
annie.forrest@goodshep.com.au

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**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER ...**

A Papua New Guinea girl looks at her little sister sleeping on a bilum. The women of Papua New Guinea prepared the World Day of Prayer for 2009. Each year the celebration is held on the first Friday of March.

**March 8: International Women’s Day**

It was on March 19, 1911 that the first International Women’s Day was celebrated. The idea was from Clara Zetkin who suggested during the International Conference of Working Women that every year in every country there should be one same day when women’s solidarity presses for equality. The celebration was held, articles and newspapers were published analyzing the question of the equality of women in government and in society.

In 1913 International Women’s Day was transferred to March 8 and this day has remained the global day for International Women’s Day. In 1975, the IWD was given official recognition by the United Nations and was taken up by many governments.

Many celebrations on women are scheduled around this day.
The Good Shepherd Family has recognised that the Victorian bushfire tragedy represents a natural disaster on a scale previously unknown in Victoria with so many lives lost, people injured, and whole communities destroyed. Please see below their messages.

Our thoughts, prayers and best wishes are with all who have suffered loss in the devastation of the recent fires. May we all take strength in the knowledge that we are not alone in the grief, collectively we grieve, and collectively we will heal. Let us all do what we can to contribute to the healing process over the coming weeks, months, and even years.

Messages of support and concern from Bridgid Lawlor, Sabina Pathrose (Link councillor)

All the personnel of the Mother House in Angers are also very concerned, thinking and praying for those affected by the bush fires.

All those representatives from global Good Shepherd attending an International Session of Spirituality Centres who met at Angers during the 3rd and 4th week in February 2009 send their thoughts and prayers.

Sr Armelle Dehennault, CLT

For several days we have seen pictures of the fires in Australia. We can imagine that all the country is concerned and lives in fear and worry. We hope that our sisters are not directly touched by this situation. We pray for all of you and your people asking the Heart of Mary to look upon you and give you courage.

Liliane Tauvette and the sisters of Canada.

Dear All,

We are thinking of you and praying for you, hoping, that all our sisters and their families are safe. I remember my visit 12 years ago and the traces of the fire that I saw... We pray for a change of weather, so that the flames will be smothered.

Sr. Roswitha Wanke rgs, Schwestern vom Guten Hirten, Germany

Dear Good Shepherd Partners from Australia,

I read with concern the bush fires in Australia. How are all of you? I pray that you and your loved ones are safe.

Theresa Symons
Executive Director Pusat Kebajikan Good Shepherd, Malaysia

Writing to let you know that we keep you in prayer - and that at this time you may be a hand of hope for the people who are affected by the fires in Victoria.

Joan Lopez (Singapore/Malaysia Province leadership Team)

We have seen only a small sample of the fires which are taking place in your country. What a huge tragedy! May God give strength to the families most affected by this loss and to all who love them. Please accept our compassion and our prayer for you all, particularly those who are most affected.

Maria Angelica Guzman Vicuna, Province of Bolivia/Chile

A message of support and prayers came in from Sr Nirmala Abeyasinghe,
District Leader of The Isles (Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion).

Dear loved ones and friends,

Most of you may have been following the devastating news about the bushfires raging in Victoria. At times I can hardly comprehend the massive after effects of such a disaster. We never anticipated it would hit so ‘close to home’, in the literal sense as well.

On the news today, I watched as people recount their experience on that fiery day; I watched as people wept for the loved ones and properties they lost... yet in all this chaos, there was this scene where people were mobilizing, through self-initiative, to help those affected. It touched my heart that people who were so moved emotionally, would move in a practical way. It showed me how being community-minded can bless so many people. Most of you must have heard countless of appeals urging you to give, mostly financially. However, I’m appealing to EVERYONE, locally and overseas, to pray for this situation.

The following is a prayer that has been effectively shared among GS partners through the Malaysian Prayer Link.

Let’s pray for:

* Comfort for those who have lost loved ones and who are dealing with feelings of grief, pain, and even anger.
* The fire fighters and emergency workers who are still trying to get 31 fires across the state under control.
* Rain and favourable weather conditions.
* People may be moved to be God’s extension to those who are hurting and grieving.
* The government that God will give them wisdom to help aide the affected people.
* God’s provision to meet the needs of those who have lost their properties.

Lucy Teo (a lay associate of RGS Malaysia)

We, from Flores are very concerned and offer our special prayers for all of you in Australia, due to what is happening there. Every night we follow the news about Victoria. How are our Sisters there? We can’t do anything to help, but we bring all of you in our daily prayers.

Gertrudis Melania. (Flores, Indonesia)

(On behalf of all affected by the Victorian Bushfires, Good Shepherd Australia/ Aotearoa/New Zealand gratefully thanks Good Shepherd people from around the world for their deep concern.)
The year that passed was filled with the moments of grace in my life, including the memorable days spent in Quito, Ecuador. To begin with, it was the first time that I traveled to Ecuador, the centre of the world. Indeed it was a privilege to be in the centre of the world. Though we spent long hours of journey, it was pleasant because of the company of our province leader, Sr. Maria Rose, and Sr. Euphrasia CGS. During the long journey my thoughts were for Sr. Brigid Lawlor and the Congregational Leadership Team, who were traveling from different parts of the world to be in Quito for the Contemplative Intercontinental Assembly.

It was wonderful to be present during the CICA. I have always been grateful to God for calling me to an international congregation. The happiness of meeting sisters from all over the world, exchange greetings, these were beautiful experiences. Some faces were familiar, language was not a barrier, and we enjoyed the togetherness. The place chosen for the meeting – Cumbaya was conducive for Contemplatives. The beautiful mountainous surrounding, with lovely sceneries, the flowers, fruits, the cool weather, added to the graces.

Spending time with Sr. Gail Worcelo, and listening, reflecting, sharing on Cosmology my outlook towards nature was changed. Nature is the Guru (teacher) I had to open my eyes and learn from nature. As I watch these days, due to the summer heat, the trees and plants are shedding their leaves, it reminds me – I have to learn to let go of old ways, so that something new can come in my life.

Another moment of grace was in Intercontinental Assembly for Asia-Pacific held in Pattaya, Thailand. The place chosen – Redemptorists Centre – with its water ponds, fish ponds, surrounded with greenery etc... was, for me, a fitting follow up of CICA experience in Ecuador – everything had a touch of nature’s beauty.

Unlike the CICA where we needed translators, here we could interact with everyone, since all of us spoke English. I was admiring the way our apostolic sisters, filled with the zeal and enthusiasm of Our Mother Foundress – St. Mary Euphrasia, they dared to do anything for the mission, sharing, planning activities to improve networking – all for the sake of mission, made me deepen my understanding of their struggles, efforts to carry on the mission in the congregation and in the church.

All of us enjoyed the meeting, then at the end, a shadow had fallen on us – the news that we could not leave the country, due to the political situation in Thailand. This opportunity provided me to experience a bit of what the refugees and migrants had to go through. In our country in India, in the state of Orissa, our brothers and sisters are still living in the forest, what are they feeling? What they had left behind all for the sake of Christ? If they want back their belongings, they have to re-nounce their religion and choose to be Hindus. There after hearing the word – refugee or migrant, etc., my heart went out to them in compassion and I offered a prayer for them. But we were unlike these refugees, we had a comfortable place to stay. It was heart rending as each group one by one bid us good bye, we Indians were the last ones to leave the country. We felt the waiting was too long...nostalgia for our own home. We were in the season of Advent—we experienced waiting with patience.

I thank and praise the Lord for the numerous moments of graces showered upon me. Behind the success of our CICA and ICA were the prayers and sacrifices of our apostolic and contemplative sisters. Let us continue pray for the success of Congregational Chapter. May the Lord bless each one of us and may St. Mary Euphrasia intercede for us, to be filled with the enthusiasm to carry on the mission that is entrusted to us.

- Sr. Anita Mamoottil CGS
Province of India/Nepal
On March 25, the feast of the Annunciation, the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity (OLC) transferred their Generalate to the Good Shepherd Compound in Via Raffaello Sardiello, 20, in Rome.

The group is composed of Sr. Angela Fahy (from Ireland), Annick Egu (France), Josefina Lopez (Mexico) and Rachel Muthoni Njagi (Kenya). Two other OLC sisters are expected to join them.

After the completion of a space study at the Generalate by a consultancy firm in 2007, it was determined that there was sufficient unused space to accommodate a fourth group. In 2008, the OLCs made a new request to have their generalate at Raffaello Sardiello, 20.

Several processes took place. The request was accepted and space was allocated.

On February 2, 1997, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur became the first congregation to rent space, followed by the Congregation Notre Dame (CND) on October 1, 2000.

With the decision of the CND to move the Generalate from Rome to Paris in 2006, the space vacated was again offered to other congregations. The Missionary Franciscans of the Immaculate Conception (MFIC) asked for space and moved in by August 1, 2006.

Both the SND and MFIC have areas for their congregations. The OLC Team will have their living quarters and offices side by side with the Good Shepherd Sisters. They will have their own kitchenette and community room. All the four congregations have shared spaces like the chapel, guest rooms, and the dining room, for the main meal.

Sr. Jeanne Waddel, 1924-2009

Angelas. She was asked to assist in formation and later became the directress of formation. Los Angeles was then a designated center for missionary formation and would have at times some 30 to 40 women in various stages of initial formation. They came from the Philippines, Hongkong, and the United States. Although her aspirations to serve in the mission was not realized, Sr. Jeanne formed and influenced large numbers of sisters who carried the compassion and healing of the Good Shepherd to many different countries. Sr. Jeanne also studied at Regina Mundi in Rome, and upon her return to the United States she was assigned to St. Louis as directress of formation and eventually elected its province leader. Her leadership was filled with creative activity made possible by her willingness to listen, to trust her sisters and to try new things. Programs for women addressed prostitution, domestic violence, homelessness, and addiction. She offered hospitality to the Vietnamese novices during the fall of Vietnam in 1975. In 1979, she was elected to the congregational leadership team, bringing with her a characteristic spirit of peace and joy that spread reconciliation and unity. After her term, she served in various ministries in her province. She had a great attraction to the Heart of Jesus and her focus was always on God’s love for us.

Sr. Jeanne’s spirit of grace, peace, joy and humor has been a blessing to the congregation. She always loved the picture of the disciples Peter and John racing to the tomb after the Resurrection — and now she has followed.

Province of Mid-North America
Four Congregational Leaders and their Teams

With the arrival of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity on March 25, four congregational leaders and their teams are now holding their residence and office at Via Raffaello Sardiello, 20.

The four congregational leaders are:

Sr. Brigid Lawlor RGS  
Good Shepherd Sisters  
American  
Elected, July 2003

Sr. Teresita Weind SNDdeN  
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur  
American  

Sr. Elaine Morzone MFIC  
Missionary Franciscans of the Immaculate Conception  
Australian  
Reelected, July 2006

Sr. Angela Fahy OLC  
Union of Our Lady of Charity  
Irish  
Reelected, July 2007

Visit the Congregational Websites:

- Good Shepherd Sisters  
  www.buonpastoreint.org

- Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur  
  www.sndden.org

- Missionary Franciscans of the Immaculate Conception  
  www.mficgen.it

- Union of Our Lady of Charity  
  www.ourladyofcharity.com

Congregational Leadership Teams

Good Shepherd Sisters. From left, Srs. Elaine Basinger, Cecilia Patiño, Evelyn Fergus, Brigid Lawlor, Eliene Barros, Armelle Dehennault, Sabina Pathrose

SNDdeN. From left, standing, Srs. Maria Delaney, Liliane Sweko, Jeanne MacDonald; seated, Srs. Nancy O’Shea, Teresita Weind

MFIC. From left, Srs. Mauraid O'Reardon, Elaine Morzone, Margaret Costello, Jeanette Gaudet

OLC. From left, Rachel Muthoni Njagi, Angela Fahy, Annick Egu, Josefina Lopez
Sacred Scriptures offer a rich source of women—named and unnamed—whose lives have changed because of their encounter with Jesus. Jesus himself was changed because of these meetings. Their stories which are better read in their entirety represent the lives of women worldwide.

Here are some of them:

Peter’s mother-in-law (Mt 8:14-15)
14When Jesus came into Peter’s house, he saw Peter’s mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever.
15He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

Woman with hemorrhage (Mt. 9:20-26)
20Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. 21She said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.” 22Jesus turned and saw her. “Take heart, daughter,” he said, “your faith has healed you.” And the woman was healed from that moment.

The Canaanite Woman (Mt 15: 22-28)
24He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.” 25The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said. 26He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.” 27“Yes, Lord,” she said, “but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” 28Then Jesus answered, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

The Woman caught in Adultery (Jn 8:9-11)
10Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” 11“No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

Jesus Comforts Marta/Mary (Jn 11:20, 25-27)
25Jesus said to Marta, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; 26and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” 27“Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.”

Women in Scriptures

Besides the four congregational leadership teams (CLT) that live in Via Raffaello Sardiello, 20, other sisters who reside are support staff of the Good Shepherd Sisters, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, the Missionary Franciscans and the Union of Our Lady of Charity. They collaborate with the CLTs in the local and congregational levels.

Sisters include: Sr. Maureen Marr, secretary general of the SNDdeN; Bernadette Howes, assistant treasurer general of the MFIC; the OLC will name the support staff.

For the Good Shepherd Sisters, the Generalate Community include Srs. Helen Anne Sand, treasurer general; Ethna McDermott, secretary general; Alexandra Eisenkratzer, procurator general; Marta Ceballos, coordinator of the Generalate; Regina Kuizon, communications coordinator; Ana Maria Quiroz, hospitality coordinator; Pilar Martinez and Gratia Fernando, liturgy; and, Sr. Christine Mearms, techo-resource person. At present, Sisters Yolanda Borbon and Marie-Françoise are also in Rome preparing for their mission after the 2009 Congregational Chapter as treasurer general and communications coordinator, respectively.

The Generalate Community supports the CLT. The members have their specific responsibilities, yet are involved, too, in welcoming sisters who come to Rome for meetings and seminars. They express their internationality through liturgy, openness to culture and diverse languages. The Generalate is the home of CLT in Rome, when they are not visiting sisters in the various units of the congregation.

At the Generalate. From left, Srs. Gratia, Brigid, Regina, Yolanda, Vilma Mascarenhas, a missionary in Angola; Alexandra, Pilar, Christine, Ana Maria, Helen Anne, Marta, Ethna (hidden) and Marie-Françoise, celebrating Gratia’s feastday and Christine’s birthday.
St. Mary Euphrasia worked zealously for women, and in her desire to reach out to them, the Generalate was born. She had several companions with whom she shared her dreams and whose friendship nurtured the congregation.

We could get a glimpse of the lives of these women, Sister Mary of St. Stanislas Bedouet, Sr. Mary of St. John of the Cross David, Sr. Mary of St. Louis Royne, Sr. Marie Therese de Jesus de Couespel, from the Annals, and the letters of St. Mary Euphrasia. From the rich resources that we have in the congregation, the booklet "United for the Holy Work" published by the Spirituality Commission in 1990, offered an excellent piece to revisit.

Sister Mary of St. Stanislas Bedouet
Anne Desiree Bedouet (1795-1868)

In 1814 at the age of 19, she entered the Refuge of Tours. Only a year older than Rose Virginie, she would be the latter’s companion in the novitiate, and from the beginning they were united in a friendship that would endure until death. She arrived with SME in Angers on June 3, 1829 to prepare a new foundation. When SME returned to Tours she remained in Angers and was assistant to Mary Paul Bodin. It was the first time in 19 years that the friends were separated and there began an intimate and loving correspondence.

SME to Sr. Stanislas: Oh, how I can feel how you must be suffering, I know your soul. Its poverty, its struggles, its attractions. Your confessor is your cross, but it is the Lord who brings you to Calvary through mercy and love. Take courage. I share, dear daughter, the profound sorrow that your painful temptations bring you… (October 2, 1829).

Sister Mary of St. John of the Cross David
Honorine David (1808-1878)

She entered on October 10, 1826 when SME was superior of the Refuge in Tours. As a lay novice she was given the name Sr. Mary of St. Gertrude. She was named by the Chapter of Tours as one of the six sisters for the foundation in Angers. She experienced the difficulties of the early days in Angers.

Annals: … On June 6, when they returned from Mass, our dear foundresses discovered they had nothing to eat for lunch. They exchanged looks and asked one another, “what are we going to give our Mother? They looked in the basket of provisions… And found only a chicken which was not very fresh. Our dear Sr. Mary of St. Gertrude hurried to the garden to collect some firewood to reheat the chicken and to arrange it as best as she could.

She made her profession on September 8, 1829, the first in Angers. At the time of the foundation of Le Mans, with the consent of the Chapter, her status was changed from being a lay sister to a choir religious. She took the name, Sr. Mary of St. John of the Cross.

Sister Marie Therese de Jesus de Couespel, Melanie Palmier (1799-1848)

The Generalate was already established when Marie-Therese entered the congregation. She was loyal to the holy work and like the founding members of the community she shared a special attachment to SME.

She was born in Angers on May 16, 1799, her father had been a mayor of Angers. She was friend and benefactress of the Good Shepherd. The wife of an army officer, Marie Therese entered after the death of her husband, Claude. Mother Foundress considered her entrance as a special grace to the congregation. SME found in her a mature friend, a dedicated ally and loyal supporter of the great and holy work of the Good Shepherd. Her first foreign mission assignment was in Rome.
Volunteer service in youth ministry

“It would be a misery to me if I don’t preach the Gospel!” exclaimed St. Paul. (1 Cor. 9:16) The Good News that called us to be Sisters of the Good Shepherd, “weavers of compassion and reconciliation” has impelled us to open ourselves to the world of youth, a challenge derived from our own personal encounter with Jesus (John 1:40-45; 4:39; 12:22).

Echoing the words of St. Paul, we are implementing the Youth and Vocation Ministry of the Good Shepherd with the Youth Volunteer Program which we initiated in 2006.

The beginnings were difficult, posing a great challenge which brought us close to the world of the youth and which required some houses to welcome young people who desired to live and share our mission without having to enter religious life. After surmounting various difficulties, every year we found more communities ready to welcome youth volunteers in their apostolates.

This experiment began with the support of the Salesians who motivated and oriented the youth to work as volunteers and sent them to our communities. This was the base which promoted the impulse for volunteer service among other youth groups in our communities.

During their stay with us, we provided the space and opportunity to collaborate in the ministry. The community which accepts volunteers provide a close accompaniment for each one. At the end of their volunteer service, some express a desire to continue the spiritual accompaniment to discern their vocation and the process for entering the community, others return to their families with a new vision, including using their profession to serve the most needy of society.

At present there are 5 young volunteers doing their year of service in various communities.

In March, two more will be added. In February and March of this year, we are accompanying another group of young people who have volunteered during the vacation months.

In the course of the past 3 years we have had many joys. Two young women have decided to follow Jesus the Good Shepherd: Johanna Ajila is now in the interprovincial novitiate of Paraguay, and Mercedes Guatama entered the pre-novitiate.

We thank God and continue to pray, intensifying our efforts to hear the voice of God in the world of the youth, and trusting that the Good Shepherd will keep on sending laborers to His rich harvest.

– Sr. Guicela Vargas

Weavers of Compassion and Reconciliation in Global Solidarity

29th Congregational Chapter
June 13-July 9, 2009

“To act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God.” (Mi 6:8)
Province of Ecuador

Mary of Bethlehem Home

This mission, founded February 27, 1996, is at the service of young unwed mothers. Its objective is “to defend the fundamental right to life of mother and child and for them to experience the compassion and tenderness of Jesus the Good Shepherd.”

At this time there are 12 young women and 8 babies aged one to three months. Each child is the product of a society with hardly any moral values. The young women, having prematurely become mothers, have little or nothing to offer their babies and can neither understand nor accept the obligations and sacrifices of motherhood. Considering their sexual relations as having nothing to do with the babies, these are perceived as accidents, an intrusion and a burden.

Our mission has no “rest” – it needs to confront innumerable challenges constantly. We three sisters working in this mission have felt the intercession of St. Mary Euphrasia and have prevented abortion, the worst war of all time.

In our formation program we inculcate care for life as a gift of God. When the life of a newborn child begins to gladden the heart of its mother, a new process starts the integral development of mother and child, facilitating the re-insertion into family and social life.

– Sr. Fátima Proaño

Province of India/Nepal

News from Chennai

Roshini Nivas

Not a story but a reality

A cobbler’s daughter, shall we call her ‘Anamika’, wanted to do Bachelor of Arts in Women’s Christian College, Chennai. Someone helped her pay her college fees but she needed Hostel accommodation since her house was far away. She was given Hostel accommodation in Roshini Nivas, free of charge! While happily living here, one day she received news that one of her three married sisters had burnt herself. So she rushed home and took her to hospital only to hear that she is already dead. Her sister’s husband was put in jail but now he is back on bail. The misery continues. The two children are now left with her mother to be taken care of. Hardly was this over, than another sister’s child suddenly could not walk and had to be hospitalized and Anamika had to be with this child in the hospital.

There are many girls like her who need our help. In Roshini Nivas we are able to reach out to such girls. Here we get a lot of opportunities to live and exercise our Charism.

Marian Home

No junk food - Only creative cooking

Food is an integral part of human existence. The food prepared at Marian Home and sold in the Good Shepherd School Canteen is life-giving to both, the receiver and the giver. The Canteen provides opportunity for the girls at Marian Home to learn the art of cooking and it is a source of income for the girls and the Home. The food cooked is nutritious and tasty and brings joy to the school children. The children rush, everyday, to see what’s ‘Today’s Special’ on the Canteen Notice Board.

- Good Shepherd Sisters, India
Children’s Parliament prepares good leaders for the future

Children’s parliament is an innovative and creative way of making the children effective leaders at their tender age.

Usually we all have a false belief that children are the weaker section and they are unable to achieve anything, so they are kept away from making decisions for themselves, they are always directed by the elders. In order to show the world that they can become good leaders when they are young, the idea of a Parliament is presented to them. It is an effective tool to make the children responsible for their lives and to create social consciousness in them. In Salem in our area of operation we have started 14 Children’s Parliaments. Each Parliament consists of 25 to 30 children of varied ages. They meet once in 15 days. Each group has 12 ministers like Prime minister, Home Minister and they are in charge of different sectors. They function like the Parliament in Delhi and whenever they gather each minister reads the report of what he or she has done for the area. Initially parents were not in favor of this idea. What can the children achieve at this age? Now parents are awed by the achievements of their own children. The rate of those who dropped out from school diminished because the Education Minister works hard for 100% attendance in the school. They have cleaned their areas, removed the garbage with the help of the Municipal Corporation, intervened in the midday meals programme and demanded for good food. The teachers are afraid of these children because they are well awakened to their rights and able to assert themselves. We feel proud of our children because they are now socially responsible and definitely they will become good leaders in the future. If children are conscientized we can have a corruption free country.

- Good Shepherd Sisters India