



## ***Good Shepherd Asia Pacific Partnership***

**Session for Formation and Partnership  
Tagaytay City, Philippines  
September 9 – 12, 2015**



***“You are capable of anything... enlarge your souls” – St. Mary Euphrasia***

The first Formation and Partnership session in Asia Pacific was held during the Asia Pacific Formators Session in Tagaytay. 29 mission partners, comprising 12 sisters and 17 lay partners from 10 Units, joined 58 sisters who were participants of the Formators Session for four days from 9th to 12th September 2015. The objective of the Formation and Partnership session was to bring about a common understanding of Partnership and Co-responsibility for mission and to provide the opportunity for sisters and lay partners to co-learn and dialogue in the area of joint formation programmes.



Sr Noelene White, Chairperson of the GSAPP team and team members welcomed the 29 mission partners through a ‘getting to know you’ session on the eve of the session i.e. 8th September.



The session on 9th September began with a creative presentation on the module of holistic formation which had transpired in the earlier two weeks which helped the 29 mission partners to comprehend the journey of enrichment thus far and set the tempo for the forthcoming session. Sr. Elaine Basinger challenged the whole group to respond to the spirit which was propelling us to go forth as midwives in

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order to bring new life. Through a panel discussion including four panelists, the evolution and strength of partnership in different Units / Provinces was highlighted. Sr. Jane Kendi Mutuambia from Congo Kenya ,

Sr. Patricia Barasik Sing from Malaysia, Sr. Susan Montano from Philippines and Sr. Anastasia Sunarni from Indonesia, brought alive the realities of Partnership for Mission in their regions through their rich experiences and sharing. The ignited minds started to question on Mission vitality: ***“What is not enough and what is the Spirit calling us to do?”***, ***“What more are we called to do?”*** The introspective session disturbed the minds of the group and made each one to reflect on his/her response to the need of the hour.



The next day, each unit presented a 10 – minute report on the reality of partnership in their Province/ country. The understanding, growth and development of partnership metamorphosed in different stages in each Unit / Country, but by the end of the presentations and tête-à-tête with likeminded persons, there was a distinct shift in the understanding of partnership. The poignant and thought-provoking questions gently steered the group to encompass everyone who is part of the mission as a partner and reiterate that the central common focus is the MISSION.

The Resource Book prepared by the GSAPP team was a rich bank of information, sharing the milestones in the journey of Mission Partnership, the Guiding principles of Partnership and Co-responsibility, and Congregational Direction Statements of 2003 and 2009 with appropriate questions for reflection, paving a way for discernment and preparing Mission Partners to risk together to address the most pressing needs of the society.



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The audacious and open – hearted conversation between Sr. Helena and Ms. Chin Poo Choo from the Province of Singapore – Malaysia, presented the challenges and promises which emerged while they toiled to change mindsets, structures and governance for mission sustainability and development.



Chaos brings newness every moment. The problem is first overcoming our fear of chaos, and then mining for the great ideas and bringing them back home. The gentle turbulence and appropriate intervention assuaged the fear of chaos and created a new pathway for co-responsibility to become a reality. ***“Change mindsets”, “Change of heart”, “Create an environment of trust”, “Practice sacred space”, “Empower both sisters and lay”, “Capacity building”, “Cross***

***border networking”, “Shift of attitude from I KNOW EVERYTHING to I AM READY TO LEARN”***, were some statements that resounded in the gathering.



The delegates at the Congregational Chapter 2015, Nisansala Perera from Sri Lanka, Sr. Bridget Paily from SW India and Theresa Symons shared their experience which brought home the understanding that ALL were part of the MISSION story. The stage was set to reflect on the powerful Direction Statement which challenged each one to go beyond, risk to respond to global issues, co-create and be co-responsible for the mission. Moreover, the statement which was viewed to be meant for the Sisters, started to be viewed as a joint statement for the Mission Partners.

***Prophetic change indeed !***

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The Province of Australia – New Zealand shared three formulae for formation for Mission Partners. The resources emboldened and inspired the group to dream and surge forth to give new life and meaning to integrated mission. **"This union is in fact your defense and support, and by the strength it gives you, you will extend your branches far and wide."** – SME



Energized by the Spirit, all Units took risks to move beyond their current comfort zones and worked on concrete action plans for the development of partnership for mission in their respective Unit / Province. The plans were focused towards ensuring that the Good Shepherd charism, values and heritage remain at the heart of mission and to develop formation, education and leadership which equip people to work in partnership for mission. The synergy was admirable as we heard bold and futuristic statements in keeping with the Direction Statement such as : *"Prepare a GS Credo", "Commemorate a specific day to celebrate Good Shepherd Mission Partnership", "Establish a mission partnership team including sisters and lay partners", "Share resources within the Unit and across borders"*.



HERE I AM  
LORD...

The historic session for Formation and Partnership concluded with a poignant ritual. The centre piece depicted the vibrant Co-responsibility mandala and each person drew strength and courage as they reflected on the mandala. ***"Who Will Bring My Light To Them ...? Whom Shall I Send.....?"***. In response to this call, the mission partners responded ***"HERE I AM LORD...."*** and committed to work hand in hand with co-responsibility for the growth of Good Shepherd Mission in the future.

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## Discovering new pathways...



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