

SOUTH ASIA MEETING ON WOMEN 3
“Women Living the Eucharist in South Asia”
20th to 24th January, 2010, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Final Statement

“Do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19).
As bread broken and shared...

Introduction

Bringing our stories of women living the Eucharist we gathered together. Twenty-five women, four bishops and two priests, came from Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, and India with our Bangladesh hosts, to the Centre of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Bangladesh (CBCB) in Dhaka, from the 20th to the 24th January 2010, for the Third South Asia Meeting on Women, organized by the Women’s Desk of the FABC Office of Laity & Family.

The theme “Women Living the Eucharist in South Asia” stimulated us to draw stories from the rich depths of the inner well of women’s experiences. The more we drew from the well, the better we were able to realise the following objectives of our meeting:

1. Women who make up the majority in liturgical congregations be helped to understand the meaning of the Eucharist in the context of their lives.
2. To promote women’s participation in the mission of the Church – especially in the context of the FABC vision of “A Participatory and Co-responsible Church – living as a Communion of Communities.”
3. To learn from Mary – how she lived a Eucharistic life.

Insights:

Our visits to the survivors of violence and trafficking, sexual exploitation, drug addiction; as well as an encounter with differently-abled women who were empowering economically deprived women with skills; the various inputs, discussions, our liturgical reflections and stories gave us the following insights:

1. The sacramental celebration of the Eucharist and the living of the Eucharist are distinct but related. All the baptized are sent forth to live the Eucharist.
2. Living the Eucharist is being bread broken which can become a transforming and liberative suffering for a better world.
3. Due to the sinful structures in society women experience brokenness which they bring to the Eucharist for reconciliation, healing, peace and communion. In their turn they become bread broken and shared for others.
4. The Eucharist is being lived powerfully by broken women, when they make a conscious decision to counter the cause of their brokenness with dignity, and help others to do the same.
5. The Holy Spirit is working actively in and through women in the Church and in wider society.
6. We recognize that women of different faiths are also blessed with living elements of the spirit of the Eucharist.

7. In its totality the Eucharist is a call to wholeness and celebration of life in Christ, of relationships and communion.
8. As exemplified by Mary, the characteristics of a true disciple are listening to God, discerning the will of God, and participating in God's plan to the extent of being bread broken.
9. Mary as a courageous and dynamic person is a powerful paradigm for women in the 21st century, especially in her spirituality of "the other and otherness".
- 10 Women living the Eucharist have a special gift to be peacemakers and reconcilers.

Challenges:

1. To transcend the socially conditioned feminine and masculine qualities in order to foster mutuality in relationships and partnership in mission.
2. To deal with the negative forces that diminish woman's dignity and capacity to live the Eucharist meaningfully.
3. To create an awareness of Eucharistic spirituality to enable men and women to live it consciously.
4. To retrieve the Mary of the Gospels who stood up valiantly for the values of the Kingdom.

Commitment:

As Eucharistic people we commit ourselves to:

1. continue to work for the empowerment of women and campaign against violence to women that is so prevalent in the countries of South Asia.
2. be trained and encourage women to be trained to share the Word so that the faithful have a meaningful encounter with Christ in the Scriptures;
3. promote the Mary of the Gospels in theology and devotion as a powerful and prophetic paradigm for discipleship;
4. true discipleship which entails a courageous following of Jesus free from all fears, with deep conviction and commitment to the Kingdom Mission;
5. bring peace and justice to our South Asia region inspired by "Mary of the Magnificat";
6. acknowledge and promote the contribution of women in building and maintaining Small Christian Communities (SCCs) and in the broader mission of the Church.

Conclusion:

In following the Lord's mandate we strive as Spirit-animated ecclesia in South Asia to rediscover the significance of the Eucharist and live it meaningfully.

We are grateful to our hosts the Women's Desk of the CBCB Laity Commission and the Chairman Bishop Patrick D'Rozario csc for their warm welcome and hospitality. We appreciate the partnership of men and women that facilitated the smooth process of the meeting.

We are thankful to God for the blessings received for a grace-filled meeting.