



ANNUAL REPORT

CONFERENCE OF MAJOUR RELIGIOUS SUPERIORS SRI LANKA (CMRS)

2010 - 2011

*Your Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Spiteri,
Dear Sisters, Brothers and Fathers,*

We, The Conference of Major Religious Superiors in Sri Lanka having celebrated 50 years of its existence made a big effort to re-examine our Vision. I am proud to say at this solemn moment that, the members of the CMRS understood the important role we have to play in the country and in the Church and took this step to spell out our Vision and Mission in a meaningful way as we journey towards 2025. I praise and thank God, who has placed us as Major Superiors at this moment in history, giving us the responsibility in our own Congregation, and for creating this awareness within us, that as a collective force we are called to look for the right direction for our existence and guiding us to identify our vision for the future of CMRS, the Church and the Nation.

Placing the CMRS in this new context, I am extremely happy and privileged to present the Annual Report of the Conference for 2010 – 2011. We are greatly honoured by the presence of His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Spiteri, the Apostolic Nuncio in Sri Lanka. Your presence here with us reminds us of our connections with the Universal Church and our unique position as a Conference in the Sri Lankan Church. We really treasure and appreciate the support you give to the Conference and our activities. This year, we had many occasions and opportunities to meet you at the Apostolic Nunciature, at our celebrations and meetings. In all these instances we felt your concern towards the Religious in our country and the encouragement you give to carry on Christ's mission in the right way.

During the past week the event that took place at Prem Niwasa shocked us and the agony the Missionaries of Charity went through have brought us together as a Collective Force in Prayer. The Lord of Miracles has his own way of solving the issue and we place our full trust and confidence in Him.

1. National Situation

“Let my people and my country prosper and my people have peace of mind.” These words were spoken by President Mahinda Rajapaksa on his birthday this year. What a marvelous wish! We hope and pray that the President and his Government will be committed to this vision and that the entire machinery and resources at the disposal of the Government will be mobilized towards achieving this end. Unfortunately this wish, becoming a reality is very much doubtful in the minds and hearts of many.

In fact we are living now in a war-free country. A good number of development programs and projects have been initiated and some of them have already been completed. Another couple of them will be completed soon. The development drive is continuing and it is a good sign, although Sri Lanka soon becoming the *Miracle of Asia* is

quite an ambitious wish. The question is, what does the people of the country want? Is it development, and if it is so what is the price that the ordinary people will have to pay for this development? Leasing out some prime lands in the Capital City to foreign investors has become a disturbing factor.

The Government having won many elections comfortably seems stable. However, in many instances the intra-party rivalry within the ruling party has been quite shocking. Obviously the main Opposition parties are in disarray and its resurgence in the near future looks unlikely. Although the State of Emergency is removed, the government has extended more controversial powers to the, PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT (PTA). International pressure to investigate war crimes in Sri Lanka has not ceased. The Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation (LLRC) Commission (LLRC) report on the war was handed over to the President few days ago. We know from the past history many commissions have been appointed to investigate incidents of ethnic violence, killing of media personnel, members of Parliament and many political opponents. However, given the powers of the state, it is not surprising that either the findings have not been made public, or the investigations did not progress due to the interference of state. So, it is a question will the LLRC follow the success achieved by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Though considerable work has been done regarding resettlement, a political solution to the minority question has not been worked out as yet in any substantial way. Some feel that the Government is systematically militarizing and colonizing the north and east, which have traditionally been inhabited by the Tamil people. There is much to be done in the areas of resettlement of IDPs and Rehabilitation of ex-combatants.

There is very little effort taken to bring about genuine National Reconciliation. Developing infrastructure and building institutions and providing inputs for economic activities alone do not achieve long lasting peace and durable reconciliation. It is equally important to capture the hearts and minds of the people and eradicate the root causes and address those issues to assure recurrence of such unfortunate conflicts will never occur in Sri Lanka.

The sky rocketing of cost of living, human rights abuses, lack of media freedom, nepotism in the government, corruption in every area of governance, lack of transparency, politicization of judiciary and police departments are some of the realities of the present day Sri Lanka. It looks that the post-war Sri Lanka has become more complicated and in this national situation we are called to exercise our prophetic role. We do realize that we need to work harder, coming together as a Collective Force (all Congregations big and small) in order to make an impact in the present scenario.

2. VISION, MISSION AND ACTION PLAN OF CMRS

As a first step towards re-visioning we invited the members of all the Congrgations to give a feed back on the role of CMRS towards Religious, Church and the Nation.

The re-visioning session was inaugurated by the His Excellency Archbishop Joseph Spiteri, the Apostolic Nuncio and guided by Fr. Thomas V. Kunnunkal SJ from Delhi, India. The Programe begun with contectualizing the CMRS in the present Socio-political and Eccelesial situations of Sri Lanka.

CMRS Vision 2025

Rooted in Gospel Values, a Transforming Collective Force To Effect A Healed, Reconciled, Humanized, Integrated Sri Lanka.

This vision was unanimously agreed upon by all present and accepted as that which would animate not only the CMRS but the entire religious body in Sri Lanka. Hence there is a need for each and every religious in the country to make this vision her/his own to make it a mission of all Religious of Sri Lanka.

In transforming the CMRS Vision into Mission, the participants realized that it must contain an internal element which would spell out who we are as CMRS body and an external element which would spell out what we want to be for the world. Thus the Mission statement of CMRS is:

Transforming Ourselves

Challenged by the divisive forces at work within us and in society, we engage in a process of healing, reconciling and trust- building among us and thus become a sign of communion.

Catalysts of Transformation

Aware of trends, challenges and contexts in the country, we mobilize our resources at community, neighborhood, institutional, parish and inter-congregational levels for bridge-building activities and effect positive attitudinal changes, building trust and communion. We uphold the dignity of every human person and take courageous actions against injustice.

To make the Vision and the Mission of CMRS become a reality, an Action Plan is prepared and a Transmission Committee will be set up to take this Vision to all the congregations

3. CMRS Activities 2010 – 2011

A. CMRS MEMBERSHIP

CMRS has a total membership of 56.

17 Clerical Congregations

04 Non - Clerical Congregations

28 Apostolic Women's Congregations

07 Contemplative Women's Congregations

(56 Major Superiors - 49 Apostolic and 7 Contemplatives)

(Order of Cistercians joined the CMRS two years back, but the Prior has left the country and a community is in Sri Lanka. Their position has to be clarified still)

We thank the following members who were actively contributing to the activities of CMRS and left CMRS this year since their term of office ended in their particular congregations:

Fr. Clement Waidyasekera OMI, Fr. Gregory Noronha CSsR, Sr. Rose Fernando FMM, Sr. Maria Clarette LSP , Sr. Thangam Fernandopulle SCC, and Sr. Nirmala Samy SDB

We welcome the following members who replaced them:

Fr. Rohan Silva OMI , Fr. Shiran Fonseka CSsR, Sr. Antonette Gomez FMM, Sr. Rose de Lima LSP, Sr. Peuma Pieris SCC, and Sr. Mary Anne Fernando SDB

We congratulate Fr. Clement Waidyasekera OMI who was elected to serve in the General Council of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

B. The Executive Committee and Ex Co Meetings:

The Executive Committee of the CMRS was very active this year. This committee is the livewire of the CMRS as it plans, monitors and evaluates the activities of the conference. Having had several activities this year, the Ex Co had met several times although the committee had planned only four meetings for the year. The last Ex Co meeting was held in Jaffna for three days. This was our first live-in meeting. We have prepared the handing over report to the next Ex Co during this meeting. We felt this would be a help for the continuity of the activities of CMRS. For better working, we have also appointed ad hoc working committees.

C. MEETINGS AND PARTICIPATION

a) AGM 2010

The last Annual General Meeting was held on December 1 - 2, 2010 at Tewatte Retreat House. The Following reports were submitted:

- Report of the Sister Formation Programme by Sr. Rubika AC, the Dean
- Report of the Committee of Religious Formation (CRF) by Sr. Malathie Dassanayake PH
- Report of the CMRS Committee of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation by Fr. Sunil Rupasinghe SSS and Sr. Rose Fernando FMM
- Financial Report by Bro. Denzil Perera FSC, the treasurer

His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Spiteri, the Apostolic Nuncio was present and after the presentation of the Annual Report of the President, he addressed Conference.

b) Annual Meeting of the CBCSL and CMRS

Along with the Major Superiors all the bishops and the new Secretary of CBCSL, Fr. Tony Martyn were present. The CM members welcomed Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith who participated in the meeting for the first time as Cardinal, President of CBCSL, Archbishop, and as the Chairman of the National Catholic Commission for Clergy, Seminaries, Religious and Secular Institutes. This meeting took place on December 2 -3, 2010 at Tewatte. There was a discussion on the Joint Commission of the CBCSL and CMRS. Mr. Rohan Edirisinha addressed the groups on the present National Situation. Responses were given by His Lordship Bishop Kingsly Swampillai and Sr. Rose Fernando FMM. Several resolutions were taken during this joint meeting of CBCSL and CMRS.

c) Quarterly Meetings

This year, as usual we had 3 quarterly meetings.

- 1st Quarterly Meeting was held at ISFA Hall, Mutuwal on 11th March 2011.

Three members of the “**The Inter-Congregational Women’s Desk (ICWD)**” , an Independent Inter-Congregational Forum - Sr. Canice Fernando HF Chairperson, Sr. Immaculate Alwis RGS & Sr. Marie Lourdes AC shared about the activities, organized by ICWD, during the recent years and shared also about their plans of celebrating International Women’s Day on 26th March with an Inter Religious Group of Women at Hindu Ladies College Wellawatte and holding a Convention for Women Religious on the theme “**Healing of Memories & Reconciliation**” at Good Shepherd Convent, Kotahena on 17th- 18th May. They invited The Major Superiors to participate and requested them to send members from their Congregations.

At the same meeting Sr. Nilanthi Ranasinghe FMM – from Caritas Sri Lanka/ SEDEC introduced a Document on Child Protection and Sr. Fatima Nayaki AC , also from Caritas Sri Lanka shared briefly the theme of the Lenten Education Programme 2011 of Caritas Sri Lanka - **CHRIST IS OUR HOPE**.

Rev. Fr. Noel Dias, Lawyer and Judicial Vicar of the Archdiocese of Colombo and Mr. Shammil Perera, an Attorney at Law addressed the CMRS, on legal matters pertaining to the administrative work in the Congregations. They explained also the procedures to be adopted by a Congregation to become a legal Trust

Mr. John Britto from “Right to Life” also spoke to the members and requested them to participate in the programmes against the Disappearances and to take part in the campaign to force the Sri Lankan Government to sign the UN’s “International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance”

- **2nd Quarterly Meeting** was at the beginning of the Annual Live-in Programme which took place 20th – 24th June at Eymard Campbell Retreat House, Hanwella.

During the Quarterly meeting, Fr Elmo Dias, Chairman of the Archdiocesan Commission for Structural Adjustments (ACSA) and Fr. Cyril Gamini Fernando a member of the same Commission shared with the CMRS members about the Restructuring Plan of the Archdiocese of Colombo and requested us to submit suggestions to the Archdiocese. A Committee under the leadership of Fr. Mark Fernando TOR studied the issue and submitted the report to the commission later.

Leadership Training Programme

“Called to Serve” – Leadership Programme for the Major Superiors was organized during the Live-in. Bro. Mani Mekkunnel SG, National Secretary of Conference of Religious (CRI) – India and Fr. Joe Arimpoor SDB were the resource persons.

- **3rd Quarterly Meeting** was held on October 3rd at Tewatte Retreat House, before the Re-visioning Programme.

d) Jubilee Celebration

50 years CMRS was celebrated with joy in a simple celebration on June 4th. His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Spiteri, the Apostolic Nuncio presided over the Thanksgiving Eucharistic Celebration. His Lordship Cletus Perera, ODSB, Major Superiors. Representatives from the Religious Congregations, past major superiors and invited guests participated in the ceremony. Bishops and many others regretted their inability to present and sent their wishes and assured their prayers. Our thanks go out to all who were part of CMRS Jubilee celebration. While commemorating the 50 years of grace, we proudly remember our predecessors, men and women of wisdom and courage for what they have done for CMRS, to the Church and to the country. The present CMRS is a silent witness, of those great achievements.

e) CMRS Directory, CMRS Website and CMRS News

In the Golden Jubilee year of the CMRS, the second updated edition of the 'CMRS Directory' was published. The First edition was published in 2002, nearly a decade ago. In this second edition efforts were taken to include as much information possible about all the Congregations working in Sri Lanka. It was released on the day of the Jubilee celebration. We thank and appreciate Sr. Bernadette Fernando SCC, our Executive Secretary for her untiring hard work in bringing out this new edition of the directory.

CMRS new website also launched during the Jubilee of CMRS. www.cmrs.lanka.org is the new official website of CMRS. It contains Information about CMRS, sub committees, history, news, upcoming events, photos and many other interesting and informative sections.

In connection with the jubilee celebrations news and information about CMRS and Religious in Sri Lanka were published in Catholic News Papers in all the three languages. We say Thank You to the Editors of the papers and the staff of the Colombo Catholic Press.

f) MISSIO Scholarship Board

In 2009, MISSIO established the CMRS - MISSIO Scholarship to process the scholarship applications of the Religious Congregations. This year the Board has processed the applications and sent them twice to MISSIO. Most of the applications were accepted and the funds were distributed accordingly.

Last year after the intervention of the CBCSL, the MISSIO has requested us to come to an agreement with CBCSL and to establish a single Board. During this year efforts were taken to create a single MISSIO Board for Sri Lanka. After few meetings with His Lordship Cletus Perera, who was the CBCSL appointee, we agreed to establish a new Board with following members: CBCSL -3, CMRS – 3, Laity Commission -1 (Bishops 2, appointee of the CBCSL, president and Secretary of CMRS, an appointee of CMRS and the National Director of Laity Commission). Accordingly following are in the present Board:

- Rt. Rev. Dr. Cletus Perera – Chairman
- Rt. Rev. Dr. Valance Mendis – Vice Chairman
- Fr. T. L. Rohan Dominic, CMF
- Sr. Bernadette Fernando, SCC
- Fr. Tony Martyn (CBCSL appointee)
- Sr. Malathie Dassanayake PH (CMRS appointee)
- Fr. Leo Perere (laity Commission)

The New Board amended the constitution and it will be discussed and approved in the joint meeting of the CBCSL and CMRS tomorrow.

According to the new understanding the processing of the applications of the Religious Congregations will be done by the CMRS Executive Committee.

g) World Day of Prayer for Priestly and Religious Vocations

As customary, we organized activities in different parts of the country to celebrate this year's World Day of Prayer for Priestly and Religious Vocations. There were prayer services conducted in Colombo, Negombo, Galle, Jaffna, Kandy, Kalutara and Mannar on 13th May. The National Catholic Commission for Clergy, Seminaries,

Religious and Secular Institutes will organize the next year's activities. The Commission has requested Frs. Sunil Rupasinghe and Rohan Dominic to prepare a national wide programme for 2012.

h) Meeting with the Major Superiors of Smaller Congregations

During the leadership training of the Major Superiors the Ex Co met the Superiors of the Smaller Congregations to get to know and respond to their needs. It was an opportunity to understand the situation in which they live and serve in the church. Most of their needs are pertaining to formation.

i) The Secretariat

The CMRS Secretariat continues to function at Mutwal. Since 2005, Sr. Bernadette Fernando serves as the Executive Secretary of CMRS. We appreciate her valuable services to the CMRS. The state of the secretariat building was a concern of all for quite some time. The need for the renovation of the building was felt by the Past Executive Committees also.

Sr. Bernadette took the initiative to draw up a Project, shared it with the Ex Co, searched for a Contractor and sent an application for funds to Porticus Asia. Because of the generous support of Porticus Asia (without contributing a local contribution) we were able to begin the renovation work and it is nearing completion.

We thank Bro. Denzil Perera FSC, the Provincial visitor, the Staff of the Provincial Visitor's Office and the De la Salle Brothers of Mutwal for all the assistance in running the secretariat at their campus and now supervising the construction work.

j) Meeting at the Indian High Commission regarding Visas

With the view of facilitating in obtaining visas for the members of religious congregations to go to India for formation programmes, few members of Ex Co met Mr. Sunil Achaya, the Visa officer of the Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka. Although he promised us that the visa processing will be smooth, it was not felt so in reality.

4. CMRS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BISHOPS

We always maintain a cordial relationship with individual Bishops and with Catholic Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka (CBCSL). There are many activities that the CMRS involve to ensure the contribution of Religious in the building of the Kingdom of God in Sri Lanka.

- a) The Annual Joint Meeting of the CBCSL and CMRS is an opportunity to reflect together matters of mutual interest and relevant issues and topics that affect the life and mission of the Church in Sri Lanka.
- b) We welcome the functioning of the National Catholic Commission for Clergy, Seminaries, Religious and Secular Institutes. According to the constitution of the Commission 12 Major Superiors are to be nominated by the CMRS to represent the Religious in the Commission. They were named and they participated in the Commission meetings three times this year. They took an active role in the deliberations of the Commission. Fr. Rohan Dominic CMF represented the Religious in the committee

appointed to amend the constitution of the Commission. According to the new constitution the number of religious in the commission will increase and will include non major superiors. Fr. Leopold Ratnasekara, OMI will be in the committee that is appointed to study the separation of Academics and Formation in the National Seminary, Ampitiya.

- c) At the request of the Chairman of CBCSL a position paper was submitted and studied during the Joint meeting of CBCSL and CMRS last year. It suggested the establishing a Joint Commission made up of three Bishops for CBCSL and the full membership of the Executive Committee of the CMRS.

Although it was agreed to create this joint commission during the meeting, it did not happen this year. Instead, we were told recently by the bishops that they are not in agreement with the possible action plan suggested in the document and wanted to have a discussion on the same during this years' meeting tomorrow.

- d) The CMRS is represented in all the Catholic National Commissions. Two members of the CMRS represent the religious in each National Commission. It is a concrete expression of the participation and the contribution of the religious in the mission of the Church in Sri Lanka and the sign of collaboration between the CBCSL and CMRS.
- e) The CMRS took active part in the Lenten Education Programme 2011 of the Caritas Sri Lanka.
- f) Tercentenary of the heavenly birth of Blessed Joseph Vaz, the Apostle of Sri Lanka was celebrated on January 15th in the Country. National level celebration was held at the Tawatte to commemorate the event. We took part in the preparation and in the celebration of the event. Fr. Mark Fernando TOR and Sr. Loretta Armugan represented the CMRS in the organizing committee.
- g) Major Superiors, Formators and Religious who are in the Archdiocese of Colombo participated in the Archdiocesan Liturgy Convention from February 26 to 28 at Good Shepherd Convent Kotahena.
- h) Our prayers and wishes to His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Raymond Wickramasinghe, new bishop of Galle.

5. FORMATION ACTIVITIES OF THE CMRS

A. COMMITTEE FOR RELIGIOUS FORMATION (CRF)

Formation activities of the CMRS are organized and coordinated by the Committee for Religious Formation (CRF). The committee consists of the Vice President of the CMRS as ex-officio Chairperson and other five members of CMRS are members of it. Since Fr. Gregory Noronha CSsR and Bro. Sunanda Alwis FMS are not in the CMRS, Fr. Jeyaraj Rasiah SJ and Fr. Napoleon Sipalay (June) OP were appointed to the committee this year. The Executive Committee of CRF (five non members of CMRS) remains the same. Bro. Christy Croos FSC served as the secretary of the committee. Sr. Malathie Dassanayake PH as chairman of the committee coordinated all the activities of the committee.

The CRF met several times, planed, organized, conducted and evaluated the Formation programmes. They have printed and circulated a brochure informing the details of the planned programmes.

B. FORMATION PROGRAMMES

a) Sister Formation Programme

Rubika AC is continuing as the Dean. Thanks to Sr. Carmela AC for allowing her to continue serving the Sister Formation Programme. No of Participants:

b) CRF Programmes 2011

- i. **Seminar for Formators** – on Religious Life: Visioning into the 21st century –conducted by Fr. M. Selvaratnam OMI for 5 days – 26 participants
- ii. **Seminar for Local Superiors** – on “Mission of an animator in and through an apostolic community in today's context” – conducted by Fr. Emmanuel Fernando OMI and Sr. Deepa HF for 3 days -
- iii. **Seminar for Novices and Postulants** – on “Holy Eucharist: Its implications for Religious Formation” – Conducted by Fr. Justin Chawhan SSS for 3 days
- iv. **Seminar for Religious Priests** (within 5 years of Ordination) on “Spirituality of Relationship” – Conducted by Fr. Emmanuel Fernando ONI and Sr. Margie PH for 3 days
- v. **Novices Get together** – on “As a Religious How to face reality with myself” – conducted by Fr. Anthony pillai SJ for 4 days
- vi. **Seminar for Religious over 65 years of age** – conducted by Sr. Edel Peiris SCJM – 48 participants. This was organized for the first time and many enthusiastically participated. Similar programme is a need for the future too.
- vii. Seminars for Young Religious sisters and Brothers and Seminar for Religious Teachers and Administrators were cancelled.
- viii. Making use of Sr Inigo's presence in Sri Lanka, the CRF organized one day seminar for the sisters at Kattuwa. 135 sisters participated in the programme.

c) Formation of Formators

Lack of a formation programme for the training of formators is one of the problems religious congregations in Sri Lanka are facing. To respond to this need of the Formation of Formators we have designed a 9 month programme spread out to three years having three months each year. This programme has taken into consideration our own needs and the context in which we live. Fr. Jeyaraj Rasaiah SJ is the director of the programme. The first part of the three year programme was held at Aruppe House, Lewella from May 2nd – 30th July. His Lordship Rt. Rev. Dr. Vianney Fernando inaugurated the programme on May 2nd with the Eucharistic Celebration. His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Spiteri, the Apostolic Nuncio too, visited Lewella and encouraged the participants. There were 16 participants from 13 congregations, belonging to 3 countries –Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Philippines. Fr. Baylon Perera SJ and Sr. Shirani Perera are the resident coordinators. 2nd part of the programme will be conducted from May 2012 at the same venue.

d) Consecrated Life Course for the 4th Year Theology Students at National Seminary

This year too, we participated in the course on Religious Life for the 4th year Seminarians at the National Seminary, Ampitiya. As usual after the general introduction on Consecrated Life, different congregations presented their life and mission to the seminarians. Fr. Cyriac Njayarkulam CMF from the National Seminary coordinated the programme with Sr. Bernadette Fernando SCC. The programme was positively evaluated by the seminarians. After the completion of the programme we too evaluated the course and decided to improve our presentations.

e) Special Formation Programmes

i. English Course for the Sister formation students

Proficiency in English language of the students has always been a problem for the Sister Formation Programme. Many of the lecturers often complain about this. With the view of helping these sisters who will be participating in the Sister Formation Programme in 2012 a three months English Course was

organized. It is conducted by the De la Salle Brothers at Mutwal. The first course will be over on December 8th. Bro. Augustine Silva FSC is in-charge of the course.

- ii. Two seminars on Religious Life led by Fr. Xavier Manavath CMF from India were organized by the Claretians for the religious of Sri Lanka

Re-Visioning Consecrated Life took place from September 16th to 19th 2011 at De Mazenod House, Mattakuliya.

Re-Visioning Community Life: A commitment and Challenge: held at Monte Fano, Ampitiya, Kandy, from September 19th to 22nd September 2011.

- iii. **Training Programme on Social Work and Project writing and Management** was conducted by Fr. Lord Winner CMF and Fr. George Kannathanam CMF at Monte Fano, Ampitiya from 28th February till 9th March. The objective of the programme was Capacity building of participants to prepare people oriented projects in a professional manner and procure funds for them successfully.

6. JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTERGRITY OF CREATION ACTIVITES OF CMRS

JPIC Committee of the CMRS is functioning from year 2010. Fr. Sunil Rupasinghe (Chairman), Sr. Rose Fernando FMM and Fr. Bienvenido Basias OFM are the members of the committee. Fifteen Congregations have also nominated members to the committee. The Committee met often this year and planed their activities. They too had discussions and collective reflections on the situation of the country. Fr. Christy John CMF was serving as the secretary. Now, Sr. Kathleen AC is appointed as the full time JPIC Committee Secretary. Our Thanks to Sr. Carmella for making Sr Kathleen available for this task. The committee is still in an infancy stage. There are different fields in which JPIC committee could work – Human Rights, Documentation of evidences, Pro Life, Trafficking etc.

JPIC related activities/Trainings

- i. The seminar on **“Spirituality of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation”** was organized for Good Shepherd Sisters at Nayakakanda on 23 - 25 September.. It was conducted by Sr. Clare Nolan, RGS from the United States. Sr. Rohini RGS invited Religious from other congregations to participate in the seminar.
- ii. A Workshop on **“Documentation of Evidences”** was organized by the FSPR and the Claretians on 4th – 8th September at Fatima Retreat House, Lewella in order to raise the participants understanding of the principles of fact-finding and documentation related to violations of human rights. Mr. Sanjay V. Gathia of Franciscan International and Bro. Arnal Alcobar, CMF (Rome) were the cordinators of the programme. Mr. Rukshan Fernando and his team helped the participants in the training. The worshop raised the awareness of the nned of the documentation.
- iii. CMRS through our ‘Fund for the Vanni People’ provided Rs 700,000 worth of bicycles to the needy families in the Vanni region through the members of 14 religious congregations working in Vanni area.

7. Towards the Future

We are looking forward towards the future with hope. CMRS passed 50years of service to the Church and the nation, we are at a turning point and there is much to do. The new action plans we have formulated will help us

to move towards achieving the New Vision and the Mission. Becoming and Acting as a Collective Force is our biggest task. It will bring us into new horizons, where we can work hand in hand with others, without any differences. We have few plans and we hope the next EX CO will lead us to achieve them.

I. Transmission of Vision and Mission and implementation of the Action Plan

The Vision and Mission of CMRS will remain in papers unless it is put into practice. CMRS members will not be able to do anything without the cooperation of every religious in the country. So, this Vision and Mission and the action plans has to be transmitted to all the members of all the congregations. It is the task of the CMRS. Plans have been made to establish a team for the transmission of the Vision, Mission of CMRS to all the religious in the country.

II. Regional Religious Units (RRU)

To make the presence of the Religious felt in the regions and to contribute concretely to the building of the Kingdom as religious in a particular region, the forming of Regional units is necessary. This proposal was supported by all the religious congregations during the consultation for the visioning. Now, efforts have been taken to introduce the Regional Religious Units in the regions. By this we feel that we can,

- Become a collective force in the region
- Putting into action the Vision, Mission of CMRS
- Collaborating in the Vision of the Diocese
- Living out our Prophetic role as Religious.

III. Inter-Congregational Centre for Religious Formation (ICCRF)

We have been reflecting on setting up of a Formation Centre for the Religious in Sri Lanka. It is still in the conceptual stage. Several suggestions also have been made by the members of CMRS and other religious experts. The need for such a centre is very clear. The place, logistics and funds have to be decided. Once this kind of structure is established, courses for religious suitable to our own context could be offered and we can reduce the number of religious going to India and other countries for formation related courses.

IV. Involvement in activities of Peace and Reconciliation

The current socio-political and economic environment in the island provide an extremely narrow space to achieve peace and reconciliation among the ethnic communities. Promoting Peace and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka is an urgent need and religious are called to take up this uphill task. And this effort has to start from our own homes. The action plan of CMRS has spelled out few activities to begin this process. It includes activities of bridge building between the ethnic communities.

V. Use of New Information and Communication Technologies

The new information and communication technologies (NICTs or known as ICTs), is the collective term given to the generation of information technology produced by the merger of computers and telecommunications. ICT encompasses computer systems and networks, cellular telephony, desktop publishing, multimedia production, the Internet, cable television and others. ICT has led to the emergence of new forms of mass media culture different from the old media culture of Radio and Television. The Internet is undoubtedly the largest, most influential source of information in the world today. Yet, in some

quarters, there is still suspicion of the Web and its content. For many Facebook, Twitter, YouTube are mere time wasters. But to a growing number, including both Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI, the Internet is a way to guide people to God and a vital tool for today's evangelization. We need to think in what way we can use ICTs for evangelization in Sri Lanka. It is a field that is still untouched by any religious in Sri Lanka.

8. Acknowledgements and Thanks

Deaths

It is our duty to pay our homage to two of our past presidents who passed away during this year. Both of them are eminent personalities in their own congregations and in the Church of Sri Lanka.

REV FR. ALFRED ALEXANDER SSS, former Major Superior of the Blessed Sacrament Congregation and former President of CMRS (1991- 1993, 1993 – 1995) has been called to his Eternal Rest in Melbourne, Australia on 20th June 2011. He was the President of CMRS in the height of the troubled times. He was a leader with a vision and crusader of Justice, Peace and reconciliation. He was towering figure in promoting Peace, Justice and Unity - a political solution to eliminate mistrust between two communities and establish national harmony. He was an outspoken clergyman who always stood for justice and equality, and championed the rights of the people.

REV. FR. ANSELM SILVA O.M.I. of the Oblate Congregation passed away on 18th November. He has been a former Provincial Superior and has been President of the CMRS 1987 – 1988. As President of the CMRS, he was trying to build bonds between the North and the South. Under His presidency the Conference co-operated closely with the Centre for Society and Religion in different activities. It was in his time that the Conference of Major Superiors initiated a new venture of having a Residential Sister Formation Programme at Wattala.

May they rest in peace!

Thanks

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all of you, who have contributed in many ways for the mission and growth of the CMRS.

Especially I remember the following and express my sincere gratitude:

- a) To the Triune God – for the watchful concern in directing us always on the right path,
- b) To His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Joseph Spiteri – for your presence today and all encouragement and assistance always,
- c) To the President and members of CBCSL – for the leadership and collaboration extended
- d) To the Ex Co members – for the co responsibility, cooperation and support, which has been a source of strength for my work. Especially to Sr. Bernadette, for her untiring work, interest shown in the growth of CMRS and for the invaluable assistance and advice given.
- e) To Some of the past Major Superiors – for the continuous contribution towards CMRS

- f) To the collaborators in different fields – for the partnership in programmes and projects
- g) All of you, my dear Brothers and Sisters in the Conference – for your support, cooperation, participation and contribution which I privilege to enjoy during this year

Finally,

It has been a wonderful time for me working with all of you. I was privileged to lead the CMRS in the Jubilee Year and the post war era. Since many of the restrictions in the movement in the country are removed, it was easy to organize many activities. I really appreciate your readiness to contribute to the common good and the growth. During the visioning Mr. Harim Peiris challenged us, Christians to be a sign to others of peace, reconciliation and united life. For me the CMRS is clear sign of unity – members of different ethnicity, nationality, and languages etc still working together towards one goal. Hope we would be able to create the same spirit in the Regional Units we are thinking of. Thus we, religious can be a parable of unity to rest of the country. Let us work towards this. While thanking one and all, I am confident that the same support will continue to the newly elected office bearers for the next two years. When all hands join together we will become a collective force (the word we all wanted to keep in the vision). Let us contribute our best for the collective action of CMRS.

Thank you May God bless all our efforts

Fr. T. L. Rohan Dominic CMF
President, CMRS.

December 1, 2011