

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Consiglio Meeting – September 28-October 1, 2014

Report to CGSUSA Members

What honor it is to have the opportunity to serve our national association as representatives to the Consiglio. In this role, we realize the responsibility we have to communicate as fully as possible all that transpired at this meeting to our catechists and formation leaders. This report will give you an overview of the key topics discussed.

With gratitude, Karen Maxwell and Dan Teller

The seventh gathering of the International Council of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Consiglio) was held for the first time outside of Rome, Italy, in Phoenix, Arizona at the Black Canyon Conference Center.

The following 17 members attended: Francesca Cocchini, Patrizia Cocchini, Dina Silvia from Italy; Nora Bonilla, Tere Lopez, Amanda Jimenez from Colombia; Anne Delsorte, Mary Hare from Australia, Deborah Zeni, Susan Perna from Canada; Deborah Presser-Velder from Germany; Tere Loyo, Maria Aurora Zorrilla, Avelina Muergza from Mexico; Rebekah Rojcewicz, Dan Teller and Karen Maxwell from the United States.

Sunday, September 28, 2014

Opening Scripture Reflection – Isaiah 11:9

Francesca opened the meeting with a brief prayerful reflection on Sofia's favorite verse, she said, from Isaiah 11:9 referring to Sofia's translation of this verse found on the back of an Italian Memorial card for Sofia. It reads:

Spunterà un ramoscello dal ceppo di Jesse e un virgulto dalla sua radice fiorirà... e sarà in quel giorno: la terra piena della conoscenza del Signore come il mare delle acque che lo ricoprono.

There shall come forth a twig (a shoot) from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will flourish ... and on that day, the earth (will be) full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters that cover the sea.

Francesca said that Sofia loved this verse very much because it speaks of the Parousia and what it will be like. We hope that Parousia comes soon and that through our work, she continued, we will help to bring about Parousia. Sofia said that when one looks out at the ocean, the sea, there are no holes. That is how the knowledge of the Lord will be at Parousia.

Francesca then said, "Now we begin our work!"

From Sofia's Journal – An experience with children and the Bible

However, we then had another opportunity to aid our reflection with a passage from Sofia's journal on an experience she had with the children. It was about a time when Sofia had to improvise with the children who were preparing for First Communion in giving them the gift of the Bible. Typically, that had been done with Fr. Giancarlo during a Mass but he was not able to be there. Instead, Sofia met with the 8 children herself. We read this excerpt in our own language – Italian, English and Spanish:

From Sofia's Journal: *The Consignment of the Gospel, 2006*

"How wonderful! 8 children to whom I had to consign the Gospel because P. Giancarlo was not able to be present. I was so little prepared; however, I was "obligated" by the children to do it well. Beginning with the first child, it dawned on me that to give the Gospel with just a few words – a biblical verse perhaps – would not be enough. The children sat unmoving in front of me, waiting for something more. And so, a conversation came forth between me and each child, born through eyes and words, and then ended with a kiss.

Where I found the words, I do not know!

The only thing I had thought to give was the verse from Psalm 119 which says: "Your word is a light to my path" (verse 105); but facing those shining eyes before me, it was not possible to repeat the same words to them all; and in any case the biblical verse was not sufficient.

Very gradually, as the children came close to receive the Gospel; the Book attracted me more and more, as though it became increasingly precious. What a beautiful feeling, what a totally unexpected gift. That book was held in our hands, and passed from our hands, as a precious treasure. The consignment happened as it had in 2005, taking as our departure point the parable of the Good Shepherd (with the material).

I think that it may be preferable to have the consignment (of the Gospel) take place outside the context of the Mass; it is a way to apply the Montessori principle: "isolate the difficulty." ...In this instance, we are not dealing with "difficulty" but with points of great value, and which we do not really manage to enjoy other than by highlighting them separately."

Sofia

We discussed what Sofia had written and what seemed to strike us about what Sofia wrote. Sofia used the Eucharistic Presence material during this moment. As a child came forward to receive his or her Gospel, the child would take a sheep from the sheepfold and place it around the altar of the Eucharistic Presence material.

Sharing and reflecting on Children's Artwork

We moved from this reflection to sharing and reflecting on some anecdotes of the children's experience in the atrium and selected children's artwork. Each association was asked to bring either children's artwork or an anecdote to share at the meeting.

Francesca reminded everyone of the Consiglio meeting in 2007 in which Sofia had invited Fr. Innocenzo to speak and before he began his talk, Sofia asked him to look at and interpret some artwork from a child of the Eucharist. It was quite an interesting experience to see. Then Francesca shared that in Italy at the conclusion of formation courses, the catechists have an oral examination and for that examination, they started to show the catechist a drawing from a child and ask the catechist to interpret it. Francesca said, "It seems a very useful exercise. A way to refine our sensibility and our own capacities and see what the child is teaching us. There is a negative tendency for adults to give a quick response to the child (in looking at their art expression and say), "how nice!" This is why we thought to ask the associations to share this, which gives us an opportunity to remember that the child is the center of our work. They are always teaching us. What can we learn from them?"

From this sharing and discussion came an interesting revelation for most of us present. In listening to the Word of God with children Francesca said, "The first time we present a biblical text to the children even in the third level, we (the catechists) need **to read it to children and the children listen.**" They are not to read it from the Bible at that time but to simply listen. "The Word of God is something we first listen to before we read it," she said.

This statement caused a bit of surprise among members of the group as it was the first time that this had been heard. So several asked questions regarding the reading of the Old Testament scriptures for the typology work. Even in that case, too, when there is so much to read? Yes, the children can refer to the Bible themselves when doing the typology work. Francesca said, "Listening helps our remembering, to really know it well; to become a part of us."

We spent a good amount of time reviewing the children's drawing brought from each association and important examples of how work becomes prayer. It was also emphasized that it is important to lift up these examples of the children's artwork in formation courses.

Each country association was prepared to give a report concerning Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in their country.

The Italian Association Report

Given by Francesca Cocchini

Francesca gave the report from Italy. The Italian association now has a website. There are 5 formation leaders in Italy. Francesca offers in her home a course each year. They meet every Tuesday. This year they have 20 participants including 2 sisters of the Missionaries of Charity. Some of the difficult issues they face with CGS in Italy is that it is appreciated but not well known or understood. However, those at higher levels of the church speak well of it. There is an openness to CGS for 3-6 year olds since there is nothing offered for this age but it is difficult for it to be accepted at all levels. Francesca said that they have decided that if the parish is not open to having all levels of CGS then the parish should not start CGS. They see this as not being fair to the children and that parents need to understand its full development. Francesca also said that Sofia acknowledged that it is not possible to reach every child in the world with CGS. Francesca said that where they go to introduce CGS they have found it important to give the whole vision of CGS. It is also difficult in many parishes to have a dedicated atrium environment and to prepare catechists. They have found that there is a larger demand from the bishops for CGS than they have resources but they do what they can. They do see that the children do not want to leave the atrium.

The Canadian Association Report

Given by Deborah Zeni

Deborah Zeni gave the report for Canada. Their association is 9 years old and has had some growing pains. Recently they had a board retreat with Brother Ignatius leading it who began with Isaiah 52:7: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." It was an opportunity for the board to consider the roots of their work and to collaborate with each other. They re-committed to building intentional communities that are sacred and safe places where children and adults can enjoy the presence of the Good Shepherd. Geographically, Canada is so large that it is a challenge to respond to requests for CGS training across the country. They are the second largest country in the world. They have interest in CGS from coast to coast as well as into the upper Yukon territories. It is so expensive to travel from one part of the country to another but they do respond even though they currently have 5 formation leaders with their association.

Monday, September 29, 2014

On Monday, Francesca began the morning session with a reflection from Sofia on

The Difference Between The Catechesis and Catechism

Francesca Cocchini

Summary

Sofia has given images to help us understand the difference between catechism and catechesis:

- In catechism, a teacher holds first place. In the catechesis, the first place is held by God and by God's word.
- In catechism, the child is passive. In the catechesis, the child is the main actor, an active participant.
- In catechism, it is the teacher, the adult, who is active. But in the catechesis the activity of the catechist is very particular.

Francesca spoke to us on these major themes regarding the respective roles and activity of the child and the adult in catechesis:

- The importance of the proclamation
- The importance of listening as adults
- Catechesis as embracing mystery
- The primacy of the Bible in seeking answers

These themes are slightly developed below. A fuller explanation of this theme will be shared in a separate article.

The Difference between the Catechesis and Catechism, continued...

The Importance of Proclaiming ...

It is that still, small voice (cf. 1 Kings 19:12) which, in the catechesis, the catechist must help to resound, to echo. It is important that the word be sounded forth (proclaimed, read) by the catechist. It is very important that we remember the great value of **hearing** the Word for the first time with children. It is also important to know how to live that moment of our announcement, of our proclamation, as if we were hearing it for the first time – that complete attentiveness, openness to listening.

... and of Listening

In formation courses, even before speaking of the difference between catechism and catechesis, Sofia would say we do not do catechesis **to** children, but **with** children. This is continuous formation of ourselves, something we are always moving towards: become better listeners, deeper listeners... Something that can help us prepare to present to children is a question: "What will the children help me to see, to understand today as we listen to this text?"

Seeking Answers in the Bible

When children ask us questions, whether it is in a group moment or in their individual work, we must search for the answer to their question in God's Word. Even if the answer is very, very simple and we know it extremely well, we want the children to see where the answers come from. So we open our Bibles. In opening our Bible to look for a particular passage, we might not remember exactly where it is, so we say to them, "Wait a moment. Let me search for it, find it."

When children explore the Bible, it nurtures their independence and their dependence on the Bible. Even in Level I, the children need to see us seeking in the Bible the simplest of phrases. For example, "What did Jesus say about this pearl? It is the pearl of ... let me see." Open the Bible and seek/read even this very simplest of answers. The children need to see us seeking in the Bible.

Embracing Mystery

A child might ask, "What will I feel like in the Parousia?" We would quietly, calmly say, "We don't know." Catechism seeks, intends to always give the exact right answers. We are guiding the children in catechesis to search for the answers in the Bible, but also to embrace and be aware of mystery.... Are we also asking ourselves these questions, not just the child as an exercise of getting them to answer; are we also asking ourselves?

Report from Australian Association

Given by Mary Hare and Anne Delsorte

Mary Hare gave the first part of the report from the Australian Association highlighting that the first Formation Leader gathering in Australia was given in June 2012 and that in August 2013 they held their first online meeting of the Australian Association. One of the challenges to the growth of CGS in Australia is the size of the country and the opportunity for catechists to meet for courses. In Australia, there are 5 formation leaders with 10 assistant formation leaders. Some of their challenges also include the different personality and styles of the formation leaders in approaching the work. Fundraising is not always easy for them.

The work that Mary Hare and Anne Delsorte (who serve their association as president and vice president of the board) have also been called to do in bringing CGS to adults and children has been to respond to requests for formation in other countries. They have nurtured the development of CGS in Singapore, in Uganda, in Papua New Guinea and in Beijing, China. They have not only offered courses in these areas but are also mentoring future formation leaders in Singapore, in particular. Mary shared a power point presentation of the work they have done in Singapore and Uganda.

Anne Delsorte continued the report by sharing about the particular call she has felt from the time she was 18 years old to be a missionary. She has served the CGS in courses in Singapore

and now in China. Anne shared with a power point presentation the challenges and joys of going to Beijing to begin formation there. She first led a course to only English speaking people with 12 participants. The next course in June/July 2014 was going to be only for 30-40 people but when Anne arrived she found that there were 134 came to do the training. They had 4 translators to assist. At the end of the Level I course the participants were asked to write what did God reveal to them, what did they discover from their formation and over 100 of the participants wrote the Found Sheep because they felt as if they were the sheep who had been found. Of this group of participants and with the influence of Fr. John Zhu (who came to our Celebration), 16 priests came to visit. Translation of the work into Mandarin is a major issue. For an example, the word "atrium" is not word that can be translated for them. Instead they use wording like "God's holy room."

A Reflection on the Importance of De-Schooling of Catechesis

Rebekah Rojcewicz

Summary:

The de-schooling of religious formation is one of the ten original characteristics of CGS. Based on her observation of practices in atria and formation courses around the country, Rebekah believes we have not yet fully learned how to live de-schooling.

We need to carefully reflect on our practices in light of this key characteristic. The importance of de-schooling must first of all be emphasized in adult formation courses, where we model for the adult how to 'live a shared religious experience with children.'

A list of common concerns and recommendations for placing de-schooling back at the center of our work is presented below.

In the atrium:

- Children are sometimes brought in and kept in a semi-formal prayer time first. It can happen that when children enter the atrium we feel we must hold their attention and pray with them before they have had something to respond to.
- The adult presentation takes a major part in the atrium. Therefore, there is less work time.
- There are shorter atria sessions – 45 or 60 minutes. Very common, especially in a parish. We begin with what we have – perhaps 60 minutes – but if that time does not grow, something is very wrong because what is lost in that shorter time is not the time for the adult presentation, but the children's personal work time, choices to make, silence, time to work.
- It is also fairly common not to have mixed-age grouping (only 3-year olds or 3- and 4-year olds). This is a reflection of an academic model: easier for us as teachers if we have just one age group.

- Smaller but concerning point: atrium syllabus already designed for entire atrium year. In Rome, we met each week, shared children's experience in atrium that day, discerned how to proceed.

In formation courses:

- An overemphasis on the adult lecture (work 'lecture' should be banned from our vocabulary).
- An over-emphasis on the one perfect way to give a presentation, as if it were a choreographed dance and you have to give the presentation in a certain way.
- An academic tendency reflected in album page work. E.g.: 4-5 page album pages in which we must have to write up every detail. IF we are not growing simpler in this work, we are not growing.

Suggestions to return to 'de-schooled catechesis':

- Focus on adult formation courses, because we are forming catechists to be able to live a common religious experience with children.
- The heart of a formation course is to open the eyes of the adult to the riches of the child's spiritual life. Closely related is the adults' taking ownership in the most essential truths.
- We have to understand and it is very liberating to know that I am not there to teach them everything. We have to find happiness in this role as an 'unprofitable servant.'
- Emphasize that what we say as adults is less important than the hearing of the Word.
- Do not pretend that adult participants are three-year olds. Give them a moment to respond from their own heart, but do not stay there long. Go immediately to the child's response to that same Word: what the child says, how they draw, how they work with that material.
- Teach and model how to introduce scripture: We don't just pick up the Bible and begin reading; we give a little introduction. We must do this with adults as well. We must introduce them to major considerations of the catechesis, but we must not give a lecture.
- Keep in mind our spiral method: even when we introduce something we don't try to tell everything about it. We just pick the most essential announcement. E.g., we don't spend three days on Maria Montessori, we just introduce her essential vision of the child, then we return to this throughout the course. We keep adding.
- Consider assigned reading: The standard is to assign readings ahead of time. Here, we are saying, you first need to understand what Sofia has said in order to understand what Jesus has said. This shows not enough trust in the power of His word. Nothing we do or the way we do it should ever preclude the participation of lesser educated people, and by putting reading/understanding the text first, we are saying that is more important and are limiting the participation of people who cannot read and understand RPC.
- The other most important element in a good formation course is that we give them atrium work time – making materials or working with materials.

Review of the Statues of the International Council of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

(Revised, February 2010, revised September 29-30 2014)

From Monday afternoon into Tuesday, the Consiglio discussed its Statues and made the revisions to some of them as indicated below.

- 1) As of October 25, 1996, the International Council of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd **was** established, with its base in Rome, at Via degli Orsini 34. (Changed “is” to “was”)
- 2) The International Council of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a sign of the unity of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, which is present in various countries through formally established associations.
- 3) The International Council of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an instrument for maintaining unity among the catechists and the identity of the Catechesis as described in The Characteristics of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (The 32 Points of Reflection).
- 4) The International Council of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd meets every four years and is made up of the two catechists/representatives from each association, the Executive Committee and the honorary members that include: Sofia Cavalletti, Silvana Montanaro, Adelaide Balmas, and Luigi Capgrossi.

This statue was revised to state the following:

The International Council of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd meets every three years and is made up of the two catechists/representatives from each association, except for those countries with Executive Committee members. The Executive Committee made up of Francesca Cocchini, Nora Bonilla, Tere Loyo, and Rebekah Rojcewicz.

- 5) The representatives of the associations to the International Council of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd are two catechists from each country where the following requirements have been met:
 - The existence of a formally established association for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
 - Engagement in the work with the children in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for at least seven years
 - A complete vision of the catechesis, meaning knowledge of all three atrium “levels” and the means to insure formation of catechists at all three levels.

An addition to this statue was the last point – A complete vision of the catechesis, meaning knowledge of all three atrium “levels,” **be able to train in all three levels**, and the means to insure formation of catechists at all three levels.

- 6) The representatives from the associations to the International Council must be chosen according to the following requirements:
- They must be catechists who have a solid, lengthy experience working with children in the atrium (in all three levels) and a complete vision of the catechesis.
 - They must be in cooperation and communication with their association’s board or equivalent governing body so as to have as complete a vision as is possible of the development and needs of the catechesis in their country, and they must be willing and able to communicate to their association what transpires at the Consiglio gathering.
 - At least one of the two representatives must be currently working **with children** in an atrium. (Wording added)
 - In countries where there are catechists of different Christian confessions, the association’s choice of Consiglio representatives must reflect the ecumenical situation of that country.
- 7) The tasks of the International Council are as follows:
- **Communication:** to facilitate communication and the exchange of experiences at the international level.
 - **Formation:** to reflect on proposed **content** (was programs) in the formation of children and adults. (The word programs changed to content)
 - **Research:** to call forth research and a deepening of understanding regarding both aspects of the Christian message (the doctrinal content) and the methodology pertaining to the themes of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
 - **Materials:** to respond to observations and questions regarding the materials in use
 - To approve the requests of new associations to become part of the International Council
 - To make all decisions regarding the assurance of the correct application of the method of the catechesis.
 - **To elect** among the associations’ representatives (the members of the Consiglio) those who will constitute the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will consist of up to 7 members at least one of whom must be Montessori trained. **The wording To elect changed To Name and there was some discussion if this point should be eliminated.**

8) The Executive Committee:

- ~~Elects its own coordinator~~ **This point was deleted.**
- Has the task of executing the decisions made at the Consiglio meeting and dealing with other concerns [that arise between Consiglio meetings and] that will then be ratified at the next Consiglio meeting
- Is responsible for communicating directly with the boards of the associations [or equivalent governing bodies] in preparation for the next meeting of the International Council.
- Can invite ~~one or two~~ **guests** to the Consiglio meeting, according to the needs/interests that arise pertaining to the themes to be addressed at a particular Consiglio meeting. **(Wording changed to: Can invite guests to the Consiglio meeting, around a particular theme who can offer expertise to the Consiglio meeting.)**

9) It is the responsibility of each association to implement the decisions of the International Council in its own country.

Several of these statues had considerable discussion especially around how often the Consiglio should meet (three or four years) and if there should be one or two representatives attending from each association. The discussion around the number of representatives is in anticipation of adding additional associations. There are 13 associations around the world but only 7 are represented in the Consiglio. However, it became clear that none of the additional associations will be ready to send representatives before the next Consiglio Meeting so this decision was tabled until then. Francesca wanted to reiterate that no catechist feels left out of the work of the Consiglio and that all information that is exchanged during the meeting is shared by each association among its members.

Tuesday, September 30

Reflection on the Essential Points of the Christian Message

In 1999, we saw that some guidelines were needed to help formation courses focus on the essential, because we saw that there was a tendency to address too many doctrinal points. Gianna said, "But we need in courses to be sure that people know what is most essential for that age group in the atrium." She gave us two particular guidelines:

1. We should only look for one or two essential points, especially for the younger children.
2. The direct aim will be a re-wording of the most essential point of the Christian message.

The work to find the most important essential points of the Christian message for Level I was initiated in 1999 and then continued with individual countries. In 2011, the Executive Committee proposed the same kind of thing for Level II. We have now done the same thing with Level III – sent a starting point for reflection. We are proposing this document as a starting point for work in your country for naming, claiming, discovering an even more simple way. We will want to hear from countries before next Consiglio so it is a more ongoing exchange.

Any document we will eventually develop is never to be given in courses, published in a book, presented as "this is the way it is." It is purely a guide to be used [by formation leaders] in courses.

Francesca underscored the importance to go back to these points to deepen an understanding, reflect with the materials and find the simplest, most essential, but we need to try to be in agreement on what is most essential.

Report from the Missionaries of Charity

Given by Sister Clare from New York City and Sister Justus from Atlanta

The Consiglio members enjoyed a report from the Missionaries of Charity about the formation of their sisters in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd around the world and their work with children and adults.

Report from the German Association

Given by Deborah Presser-Velder

Deborah began by highlighting that it has been 25 years since the first atrium began in Germany. In Slovenia, it has been 12 years since the first atrium began. Deborah has been involved in giving CGS formation courses in Austria and Slovenia and also in Germany and Latvia for the Missionaries of Charity.

A recent big work was to revise the *Religious Potential of the Child* in German. Deborah reported that CGS has no recognition by the Church in Germany. In Austria, however, the Diocese of Vienna has recognized CGS. Deborah has had a good dialogue with Godly Plan people in Germany, which has been adopted as catechesis for all Protestant churches in Germany. Those involved with Godly Play invited Deborah to show them about CGS. They wanted to see the similarities and differences to CGS.

The difficulties that need prayer and support for CGS in Germany is that there has been very slow growth in Germany of CGS. There are very few formation leaders and few members of their association take an active part in their association. The qualifications for working in churches is very high which makes it a challenge with CGS as well.

Report from the Colombian Association

Given by Amanda Jimenez

Amanda Jimenez used a power point presentation to show the special gatherings that have been offered to catechists in Colombia and Latin America. They have had the first convention for all Formation Leaders formed in Latin America in January 2010 the aim of which was to maintain fidelity to CGS and the bonds of friendship. There were participants from 9 Latin American countries. They have proposed that they will have this gathering every three years.

The second gathering was in January 2013. They have also participated in a National Catechists gathering in 2011 and held a course on the Typology in 2011 in Bogota. All courses show how they wish to work in unity and collaboration. In January 2014, they held a gathering with Formation Leaders from Mexico to share their experiences of using the *Io Sono* book series. There were 51 formation leaders who attended this gathering.

Also in Colombia are the seminarians who have started to use formation in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd as part of the formation of their priests. Padre Ruben Dario Garcia who oversees this in the seminary has said that he has seen these priests are “adopting a new mentality” because of this formation.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is 25 years old in Colombia. Their Association celebrated its 15th year in 2011. They started an annual celebration of CGS in 2012.

Reflections on Materials: Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids

Francesca Cocchini

Referring to Montessori's planes of development, birth-6 and 12-18 are both periods of construction of the self, and this in turn is dependent on being in relationship. So from birth to six we give the Good Shepherd parable. This relationship between child and the Good Shepherd constitutes their identity of being a sheep of the Good Shepherd.

Sofia: For the age period of 12-18, the image of God that most matches the young person is the image of God as the Bridegroom. It is an image that has much importance in all of the Bible because it expresses the point of convergence of all relationships. God as the Bridegroom of Israel means that there is a complete reciprocity, a complete exchange. It comes with responsibilities. The bride and the bridegroom are part of the same reality – they share the same reality.

Fr. Mongillo: In the growth of the life of faith, the spiritual life, in spiritual development there is a moment of maximum importance, an "awakening" to full consciousness. It happens where before it was like a dream when asleep. Adolescents are living this level of awareness of relationship. It is an age of crisis of faith in a positive sense, but still a kind of crisis.

Francesca had this experience in 1979 when preparing a group of adolescents for Confirmation. In the parable of Ten Bridesmaids, this verse jumped out: "they were sleeping and suddenly someone cries out, 'The bridegroom is here!'" The image of Christ as bridegroom is most striking in the sense of a great surprise. The focus moved from light and oil to this great announcement. It was the moment to move towards this deepening focus on the nature of this relationship: the sharing of responsibilities, the complete union. What I hope for is that those of us working with '4th level' would present this parable with this focus in mind: the being asleep and the waking up to this announcement that the Bridegroom is here.

Report from the USA Association – see separate document

Given by Karen Maxwell

Discussion about Publications

There was a brief discussion about Publications – *The Religious Potential of the Child* – Tere Loyo shared this text in Spanish and indicated that there have been edits made to this text that she wanted us to be aware of.

There was also a brief discussion about *Io Sono* as these volumes have not been translated into English yet but they are used in the Latin American countries especially Mexico in areas where an atrium is not possible for the children.

In Italy, these books are sold simply in bookstores. The Italian Association really doesn't even know who buys them or how they are used in Italy. Although Francesca understands our delay in having these books translated she also said that Sofia wanted these books to be published and available for whomever may find them.

In Latin America, there are also courses for formation leaders to use them. The courses include Montessori pedagogy – the vision of the child and the sources especially Sofia's and Gianna's books. This has been a long process of formation according to Tere Loyo.

There is more to be discussed and shared on this topic especially from the breakout session during the Celebration on *Io Sono*. This is just a brief summary of the conversation during this meeting.

Wednesday, October 1

Tere Loyo along with others from her association worked on a special presentation illustrating where Catechesis of the Good Shepherd can be found in the world, which was shared with members of the Consiglio. She also provided a printed sheet of the various countries. This will be shared later.

Report from Mexico

Given by Maria Aurora Zorrilla

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd has been in Mexico 35 years. Formation in Level I can be found in most cities although they are seeing fewer catechists wanting to participate and be dedicated. There has been notable growth in working with *Io Sono* in areas with few resources. They have had for the past four years a course each year to train formation leaders to work with the *Io Sono* albums. This year they completed Volume 5 of this series of courses. They include Montessori themes. There is great concern how they will continue to work with the Missionaries of Charity when they move and yet the atria stays and is passed into the hands of those who don't know CGS.

Their association started a website in 2012. They are now using it to share information on courses and transmit information on their conferences. They have several publications in Spanish now available: a second edition of *Religious Potential of the Child*, Francesca's book on *Moral Formation, History of the Kingdom of God, Part 1, History of the Kingdom of God, Part 2, Memories of 1976* and *Io Sono*.

One challenge they have seen is less children coming to the atrium and fewer mothers wanting to do the training. In Mexico, they would like to unify everything with the catechism because of the diocesan requirement.

As this meeting drew to a close, the members voted to meet again in three years – 2017 and the Colombian Association has agreed to host the meeting in Bogota.