



From left to right, Marietta, Daphne of the SPI and Marietta's sister  
Photos by Wendy Louis

### **German Visitor to the Singapore Pastoral Institute Small Christian Communities growing in Germany**

Marietta Tebbenjohannes from Hildesheim in Northern Germany was visiting her sister who lives in Singapore and wanted to visit a Small Christian Community. She contacted the SPI who arranged for her to visit a community in the parish of St Michael. It was the month of May when most groups are praying the rosary. Marietta was most moved when we visited a group where an old man bed ridden was at the centre of the gathering. The ease with which the group prayed in these difficult circumstances she said was very precious and rare.

On Monday 21st May, Marietta visited the Pastoral Institute and had an exchange of experiences of Small Christian Communities. Her group was started by a priest who had attended a workshop on SCCs and he started getting people interested by running programmes on faith formation. With Fr Hennecke's inspiration Marietta's group was formed. They do Gospel Sharing and their leaders meet up fortnightly with the priest in charge to discuss growth and changes in structure and new developments. Once a year there is a very large gathering of all those who belong to SCCs for the whole of Germany and Switzerland. This lasts for three full days. Last year, in 2006 the gathering was in Hildesheim.

Marietta explained: "SCCs are truly evolving and what we realize is that there is a big diversity of groups who do different things. What is important is that we have a common vision and with all our diversity we move in a common direction.

Another very important thing is that groups that are set up remain in close contact with the priest and parish team. If this connection is weak these groups will not survive. The people in these groups are asking for a better connection to the priest and the team.

Being centred on the Gospel, the Word of God, we are enabled to take notice of our neighbours and help them where possible. Without Gospel Sharing this would be impossible. Just going to Church on Sundays, you will not see your neighbours in the same way. Real growth in faith takes place in these small communities."

By Wendy Louis