

Lipa Songke: Women and Evangelization (Sr. Herlina Hadia, SSpS, Flores West, Indonesia)

The Church is now acknowledging the capacity and contribution of lay women. She continues to realize that women, with their unique capacities, contribute something for the building of the life in the Church and in the society. This realization brings the Church into sharing the responsibilities with women in various ways. But, this is still not enough, because many women must be involved in various duties in the Church, especially in the work of evangelization.

The opportune times for women is now here, where they, with all their ability as women are called to participate actively in the life of the Church, especially in making known the love of God to their own people. The women, as mothers, teachers, and in various ways, are participating in preaching the Gospel values. As for the women of Manggarai, Flores, Indonesia, their way of evangelizing people is through weaving of *Lipa Songke*. *Lipa Songke* is a traditional cloth of Manggarai people with black base color and has various motifs with theological implications. The motifs explicitly symbolize the interconnectivity between human beings and the rest of creation and their dependency in God. This is a special contribution to the work of evangelization. The seemingly wanting efforts of the local Church to empower the lay women in evangelization, challenged me to examine the lay women's contribution in evangelization as seen in the motifs of *Lipa Songke*. This is done so as to empower them to participate in God's mission.