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A Newsletter of The Grail International Leadership Team

July 2009

*Hail women
Full of grace
The holy ones are with us.
Blessed are we
And blessed is the fruit of our wombs.
Holy women, mothers of the world
We pray for all beings
Now and in the transformation
Of us all.*

*Lyrics to a song by Judith Tripp
Grail Myth Weekend, Brussels*

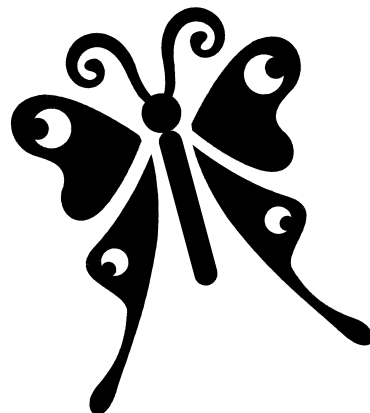


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Deadline for the next Crossroads - *October 15, 2009.*
Please send to Mary Gindhart at her address. Thank you.

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REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM, June 2009

During the time that the International Leadership Team (ILT) was together in New York in April 2009, we were able to have good meetings with Grail members of the International Formation Team (IFT), the National Leadership Team (NLT) and Council of the Grail in the United States and the Women of the Americas (WOA) Network. We also reviewed the work done since the 2008 International Work Meeting in Utrecht and made plans for the remaining months of 2009.

We thank the Grail women in and around Cornwall and the Bronx for their generous hospitality. It was wonderful to be in New York in the spring. The amazing variety of tree blossoms, the magnificent magnolia flowers and the unexpected and richly colored beds of tulips everywhere, all lifted our spirits. New Yorkers were loving the new life appearing too, after what was described by many as a 'hard' winter.

From the ILT meeting:

Txintxa Process: Ruth has worked with the Theological Resource Work Group (TRWG) to get this process moving and the first text prepared by the Milan Grail group on the "Origins of Christianity" has been distributed to Grail women around the world, together with questions for reflection. The paper was translated into Portuguese and Spanish. We thank the Milan Grail group for their contribution, the translators and the TRWG for their work.

The nominated Contact Person for each country is requested to collate and return their countries responses to Ruth by 15 August. The ILT will organize a sharing of this material.

Countries: Before the International Work Meeting in Utrecht last year, the ILT distributed a questionnaire to all countries and Networks. Of particular concern for us has been the responses to the section asking about the major developments and challenges countries are facing now and into the foreseeable future; and the impact these are having on projects and programs; what financial concerns and constraints countries are facing at this time; and hopes for expression of international solidarity.

We began a detailed review of these responses and have begun following through with some countries about their concerns. This is ongoing work and a report will be drawn up for the new ILT.

We are also reviewing the responses countries made to the particular areas of education Grail women need in their country, especially with a view to building up expertise in certain areas identified by women in countries in the global 'south'.

We are delighted that countries are providing opportunities for international exchange among Grail women. Theresia Ginau from Papua, New Guinea is now at Mushanga Dispensary in Uganda, hopefully for 2 years; Ginoca Carvalho from Portugal is at the Grail Center in Kleinmond, South Africa for one year; and Nqobile Masuku from South Africa is in the United States for six months. She will be based at Grailville and will visit other Grail locations.

Finances: The ILT is keeping in close touch with Mienieke Hage (IFO) with regard to strategy and other matters concerning the investments in the Grail Foundations that provide funds for ongoing Grail work and for the International Assistance Fund. This has been an anxious time for all of us. The financial crisis seems to have peaked and our investments are beginning to recover slowly. We hope our prospects for 2010 will be brighter and we can get on with planning for some important initiatives.

We thank Mienieke for the hard work she is doing with the accountants and the monetary institutions where the Grail accounts are. The annual finance reports for 2008 have been sent to IC members, Treasurers, Formation Coordinators and Network Coordinators and also a request for countries to let the ILT and Mienieke know by 1 September what programs will require funding during 2010.

SPECIAL THANKS TO TERESA WILSON (USA) for all the work she has done as Chair of the Capital Foundation Board since it was set up in 2003. Thank you, Teresa. We hope you enjoy a long and happy retirement in Pilgrim Place! We welcome Hellen de Wit (The Netherlands) as the new chair of the Capital Foundation Board.

Website: Cristina is working with Shirlei da Silva (Brazil) and Mariana Malta (Portugal) to redesign elements of the on the International Grail website.

Database: Marian Schwab, Shirlei da Silva and Hermien van Sloten have contacted National Leadership Teams requesting information about all Grail members in their countries, so the basic information on the database can be completed. WE URGE NATIONAL TEAMS TO COMPLETE THIS WORK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Skype: The ILT has made extensive use of Skype over the past few years and is finding this an excellent way of working. However, we feel that occasional face-to-face meetings are still very important. Ruth and Mienieke Skype regularly about finances and we Skype with Hermien also. The Theological Resource Workgroup has also used Skype to discuss and make plans around the Txintxa process. The Networks have a Skype hook-up planned soon.

The Grail in the USA is also making good use of technology for national hook-ups. We urge countries and Grail groups to keep exploring ways information technology can make national and international communications more effective.

International Elections: We are delighted that so many Grail women have put their names forward to express their willingness to serve on the next ILT. Let us join together in a time of discernment and pray during the coming months when the vote for the next ILT will take place. May the Spirit Sophia guide us with her wisdom.

We also made some plans for the remaining months of 2009, which include preparation for hand-over to the new ILT. Preparations include the following items:

- Do an overview of countries, international exchange, finances, secretariat, website, database, centers, archives, availability and use of information technology.
- Prepare a complete report of our time in office for Grail membership to be printed in Crossroads of December 2009.
- Review recommendations from IGA 2006, what has been accomplished, and what remains to be done.
- Make plans for meeting with new ILT.

Meeting of ILT (Ruth Crowe, Cristina dos Anjos, and Mary Gindhart) and IFT (Rosaurora Espinosa and Mary Kay Louchart)

As we shared what we knew and what we were thinking about formation since the 2008 International Work meeting, we realized that we needed much more information about the ways Grail formation is done in the different countries.

- The ILT has proposed that the International Formation Program planned for 2010 be postponed to a later date and that instead the International Formation Team prepare for an international meeting to bring together some of the Grail women working in national formation teams, to discuss the way forward with Grail formation. **This meeting would possibly be in July or August 2010.**
- The ILT is circulating a new draft of the *Guiding Elements for Grail Formation* for comment to International Council members. This draft will need further discussion and input from national formation teams.
- The IFT will contact national formation teams in the Grail countries to float the idea of this meeting. A workgroup will work out details over the coming months and begin preparations.

Grail Network/Work Group Reports

HUMAN TRAFFICKING NETWORK

Ton Brouwer and Mieke Borgdorff, Coordinators

Brasil – Shirlei Silva wrote good news from Brasil in combating trafficking in persons.

A partnership with the SMM (Service in Support of Marginalized Women) and Vai-Vai- Sao Paulo carnival champion of 2008 – began with a conversation on the relationship of human trafficking and health. This year, the theme of the Vai Vai is “Health: A Body is a Healthy Mind”. The director organized the First Week of Action Health in February. Besides the debates on human trafficking and health of the population, topics such as programs to combat AIDS, women’s health, environment and sanitation were also discussed.

Canada – Olga Kolisnyk sent information about Human Trafficking in Canada where there is a real push to bring this to public attention through high schools and mobilization of local groups. Human Trafficking is a \$30 billion industry in Canada from Toronto to Vancouver and Montreal, affecting some four million people as reported in the *Prairie Messenger* in Western Canada. Sister Yvette Plessis SCSL, organized a workshop sponsored by the Canadian Religious Conference of Major Religious Women Superiors in Canada. They have adopted Human Trafficking as one of their projects.

Germany – Maria Schwab sent an article last February written by Carmen Molitor called *Destroyed Hope, New Hope, The Reason Why Human Trafficking and Forced Prostitution Can Flourish in Eastern Europe*. Molitor speaks about victims from the republic of Moldau, situated between Romania and Ukraine, a small country with about 4.2 million inhabitants. It is the poorest country of Europe with big problems. One quarter of the inhabitants work abroad. Victims of women trafficking are young women between 18 – 24 years: girls who are poor and unhappy; who have to take care of old and sick relatives; who are beaten and ill-treated; who are looking for a good paid job. Owners of brothels in Germany pay € 7.500,00 for women from Eastern Europe. All women are promised good paid jobs in Germany, Italy, and Turkey. But most of them end up in forced prostitution and have to pay back all the expenses the trafficker pretends to have made for them. Several German organizations are active in the combat against trafficking of women. Among them is Solwodi (Solidarity with Women in Distress) a sister organization like the Foundation of Religious against Trafficking of Women (SRTV) in the Netherlands.

Mozambique – Yolanda Mulhuini sent in an article about child trafficking in Mozambique of poor, underprivileged children and adolescents between 13 and 18 years old from rural and urban areas. Minors are trafficked for various purposes: child labor, child prostitution, extraction of body parts, etc. Several international organizations have described Mozambique as one of the countries most affected by human trafficking, with South Africa as the main destination of the victims. In Mozambique, legal instruments are urgently needed to ensure child protection against abuses and exploitation.

The Netherlands – Phily van Dijck wrote that a book and DVD, “*Elena: a Reflection on Trafficking in Women*,” were officially launched on 29th January. It is based on an original idea of Theresa Helm, director of the Chigwell Faith and Justice Centre, London, which inspired the staff of the Dutch Foundation of Religious against Trafficking in Women (SRTV) to adapt the text, while Mieke Borgdorff, a Dutch Grail member created paintings for it. After an introduction by Dr. Maaïke de Haardt, professor of Religion and Gender entitled “The Spirituality of Risk; the Fight Against Trafficking in Women” the DVD was shown to the public. Elena is a young woman who is a victim of trafficking. The story of her suffering is recounted in fifteen stations – moments to be still. Her passion, her way of the cross, concludes finally with a positive outcome. All those present were moved by the beautiful texts and paintings. The booklet is only available in the Dutch language.

Ton Brouwer has sent out 31 DVD’s to the contact persons on Human Trafficking in each country, to the ILT members, and coordinators of the International Grail Networks. The DVD costs € 20 and is available in English, French or Dutch from: SRTV at srtv@srtv.info or St. Janssingel 92, 5211 DA Den Bosch, The Netherlands.

Articles that have appeared in recent Global Justice Overcoming Poverty (GJOP) Bulletins –

Copies of GJOP Bulletins are available from Alison Healey at grailsydney@ozemail.com.au

Philippines – Rita Joy Pastor wrote about a good deed that turned into a nightmare. [GJOP Bulletin 48](#), December 2008

South Africa – Loek Goemans sent a Pastoral Letter of the Southern African Catholic Bishop’s Conference entitled *Fighting Human Trafficking – Our Christian Responsibility*, [GJOP Bulletin 49](#), January 2009

Uganda – Josephine Nakagolo sent an article called *Rwanda Girls Trafficked for Sex Trade*, written by Henry

Mukasa. GJOP bulletin 43, July 2008

USA – The Philadelphia Grail Community recognized human trafficking as a challenge to the fundamental reality that we are one body. They invited Catholic Social Services of Philadelphia to give them input about human trafficking and efforts underway to respond locally. See GJOP Bulletin 52.

WOMEN OF THE AMERICAS NETWORK

Rosaurora Espinosa

Grail participants in the Women of the Americas Network (WoA) cancelled a network-wide meeting in July of 2009. In April 2009, rather than having such a network-wide meeting without enough time to reflect on our strategy for the next period of our “working together”, one person from each country (Brazil, Mexico, Canada, USA) met in the Bronx.

We began by evaluating how we have done—our achievements, our projects, our relation as a Grail Network with other networks, as well as challenges that we face. We looked back to our history which began with planning The Continental Conference of Women in the Americas in Mexico in 1992. We talked about our different programs and projects, the great value of each one, realizing too that our strong Spirit and support from different groups of our Grail sisters is our foundation.

Afterwards, we examined current reality as a Continent, as our strength and weaknesses put in balance. With Carol Webb’s support, (remember she has returned to the US after years abroad), we lived a “visioning exercise”, imagining three years from now: 1) countries and regions that we would like to reach and incorporate into the WoA and The Grail, 2) expectations in different directions, relationship with other networks and among us as WoA, 3) themes to work on, 4) money, 5) general organization.

Then we made a time line, took responsibilities to do homework, agreed to specific dates for Skype conferences, to report advances in countries’ processes, to develop a website, etc.

Meetings of the WoA will take place in each country to encourage more involvement from Grail members. In a July 2010, a WoA all-network gathering will be held.

GRAIL LINK TO THE UN AND EARTH, ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY NETWORKS

Trina Paulus

United Nations Commission on Sustainable

Development Meeting, May 4 to 15, 2009

CSD 17 Theme: AGRICULTURE, LAND, DESERTIFICATION Focus: Africa

In April 2008, I was excited that common sense finally prevailed in discussions about the world food issue. After four years of work, 400 world agriculture experts came to a remarkable conclusion about what it would take to feed the world in the future. The International Assessment of Knowledge, Science, and Technology Development (IAASTD) report concluded that small-scale organic agriculture will feed the world in the future. The focus will not be on increasing production, since there is now enough food to more than feed all. Rather, we must change the social and economic systems that keep food from the hungry and prevent them from raising their own, or having money to buy it. Further, they concluded that genetic engineering and agribusiness would have little role.

Since this report was UN and World Bank sponsored, I went to the UN expecting, hoping, that this IAASTD report would be the CSD template. Over 60 nations had signed on.

Monsanto had pushed for this project, but as the results became clear, the company was furious, expecting that its loud -- but false mantra that genetically engineered food is needed to feed the world -- would be affirmed. Also, as happened in other major UN reports and treaties, the US, Canada, and Australia did not sign.

The prior weekend, the CSD gave me my first clue that this amazing report was to stay in a closet. An experience at the Earth Institute at Columbia University on Religion and Ecology was the eye opener. Neither there, nor at the UN, were words like genetic engineering or GMOs mentioned by proponents of what I came to understand is now called “scientific agriculture.” Even the meaning of the key UN commission phrase, “Sustainable Development,” has been pirated. “Sustainable Monsanto” is in full page ads, and the official US interpretation now includes genetically engineered seeds and food.

I did not know all this when at Columbia. After keynotes by heroes and friends, James Hansen, the NASA scientist who was forbidden to speak about Global Warming, Mary Evelyn Tucker, and Peter Mann, the program concluded with an Earth Institute soil scientist, Pedro Sanchez, who spoke about the NEW green revolution for Africa. When I asked about

the conclusions of 400 scientists in the IAASTD report, which he had not mentioned, he responded, "This (report) was hijacked by radicals."

The following weeks at the UN confirmed that something drastic had silenced the approval of over 60 countries. I kept seeking these "radicals" and found the authors -- a group of strong women, in some side events. I met the report chairman, Robert Watson. However, the central product of CSD 17, an official UN policy text, contained nary a reference to this report.

What took place thru 2 weeks of active CSD 17 struggle and years of preparation is not worthy of the intensity and necessity of the radical changes needed for a sustainable world.

I learned that "feeding the world" was and is being used as a cover for a new food-based imperialism, now focused on Africa. "Feeding the world" frames it badly, as though industrial Western type thinking and "scientific" agriculture is needed to feed the world from the outside. The IAASTD approach, now named "Agro-ecological" is different. It is more respectful of indigenous knowledge knowing that people have wisdom and can feed themselves, if not pressed toward growing for export. We can share knowledge, but it is a mutual sharing.

I also came face to face with the role of big money - - Rockefeller, Gates, Soros -- affecting decisions both in Africa and in my country. Monsanto's first quarter lobbying report shows over 2 million dollars spent on lobbying Congress, and they got Senate bill S.384 mandating research in our universities on genetic engineering for Africa. Will they mess up millet too?

I think it is clear to all that a solution to world hunger cannot be import, resource-dependent, and fossil-fuel demanding. Food dependency on outside sources, (entrenching genetically engineered and hybrid seeds, imported fertilizer, and pesticide inputs), all of which destroy soil and contribute up to 35% of global warming, is fatal. Old social structures disappear and old varieties of seeds die in a few years. Dependency and its consequences happened in India where that "Green Revolution's" beginning years increased yields, but has now devolved into farmer despair over agricultural debt, often-failed Monsanto crops, and over 200,000 farmer suicides in the past 10 years.

So again, follow the money, save seeds, study, love, work, pray and plant your garden.

Pay attention as the US, Canada, and Australia work to simultaneously release GE wheat against the wishes of almost everyone else. *We are the many; they*

are the few. Yes we can.

P. S. Joy Garland, Nancy Taiani and I met with the lawyer for the UN Mission of the Holy See about the awful attempt by Monsanto to give the impression of the Pope's support of genetic engineering. He has made it clear that he is against a technical fix for Africa. The Pontifical Academy and the Pope are at odds on this question.

2009 COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN *Judy Alves & Jenna Messier*

At the 53rd CSW (Commission on the Status of Women) held at the UN, the Grail, as an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) lent its voice to find strategies and best practices to address the 2009 Commission theme, the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS.

The Grail Link to the UN network meets year-round and plans for the CSW. The team supports International Grail women coming to the CSW who have particular experience in the yearly theme. Link members from the Bronx Grail brought fifteen young women to the CSW this year.

This year two young Grail women from Mexico, Georgina Becerril and Ushuaia Camarena attended the Latin American caucuses with Reina Victoria Estrada. Nusia Matura from Canada attended workshops on older women. Twenty-two Grail women attended from the New York area, Philadelphia and Florida.

Angelica Nsiimenta from the Ugandan Grail was awarded a scholarship from the Division for the Advancement of Women, which paid for her travel. She found it valuable to spend time with the African Caucus. At the International Women's Day celebration at the UN Church Center Chapel in March, Angelica shared her story and the work of the Grail Dispensary in Mushanga with HIV/AIDS patients, their caregivers, and the widows and orphans of those who died of the disease. Each woman's testimonial was interspersed with the delightful sounds of Olympia's Daughters, an a cappella group, which uplifted the crowd with their smooth and powerful voices. (elmira Nazombe is a leading member of Olympia's Daughters.)

The Grail co-sponsored 3 parallel events this year: The Women's Institute for Social Transformation, organized by Simonetta Romano, co-sponsored a workshop on the Grail myth with the Anglican

Women's Empowerment, Pathways to Peace, and Women's Intercultural Network. Dr. Jean Shinoda-Bolen, a prominent Jungian psychologist, led the workshop.

The second event was a "Girls Only Event" where the girls were able to openly discuss the issues of their generation. This workshop was not open to adults. It was facilitated by two Grail members, Carol Barton and Elmira Nazombe, who were joined by Sharon Joslyn and Mary Kay Louchart and other members of the Working Group on Girls Participation Task Force, which includes two young Bronx women, Cynthia Bernardez and Belkis Martinez.

Carol Barton and Elmira Nazombe, using a popular education model, organized the third event, "HIV/AIDS, Caregiving, Race and Gender." Several Grail members helped with small group participation and some organizational details as participants shared their stories with each other, while naming how race and gender has affected their care giving ability or their access to health care.

CONGRESS FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE, OCTOBER 5-14, 2008, BARCELONA, SPAIN

Ana Bacelar and Carmen Rosado, Portugal

The objective of the conference was to bring together persons interested in conservation of nature to: exchange experiences, analyze current problems, find a better way to face today's challenges, seek alternatives, make decisions for the future, and define a path to follow.

The workshops we attended: a plan for 2010 on online interactive courses about education for a sustainable environment; the development of indicators; tools to visualize the future; useful tools for the development of projects; skill building on how to retrieve and work with data about biodiversity; supplying water to people and to nature; how to dry and store seeds for future use; and online communities sharing information on nature conservation.

We learned about new instruments for collecting information; the need for business and society in general to invest in nature conservation; the necessity for a greater investment in environmental education; and that there is a lack of concrete planning in Portugal. We experienced personal and professional enrichment by contact with persons who live other realities and through learning of new projects.

Our conclusions from the conference are: urgent action is clearly necessary. There is a need to change behaviors. There are good tools to do that. We need

to begin to use them.

BRUSSELS GROUP

Patricia Camisao

The May 23-24, 2009 weekend on the Grail Myth sponsored by the Grail group in Brussels opened with prayer and exchange among the participants. The resource person was Sharon Thomson from the staff of the Grail Center at Cornwall, New York who has presented dramas and workshops based on the Grail Myth for many years.

Sharon started by giving a history of the Grail myth, which was passed on orally throughout Europe and the Middle East since the 8th century, and finally shaped by Christianity in the era of the Crusades, following contact with Greek, Arab, and Indian wisdom.

Sharon guided us through the many variations of the myth, the possible influences behind each version, and the many connections possible between them. She was our graceful guide into our own quest. We were women of different continents sharing the depth of our experiences about the story of the myth. This dynamic that allowed us to wonder about what we have been doing and what other paths are possible, since new challenges are opening up.

The ways of the myth lead us into the International Grail's history. Sharon then led us through a practice of Image Theater to experience the International Grail as a community, as an organization, and as a movement. We exchanged data, history, and experiences, raised questions, and wondered about new solutions and ways. Our enthusiasm grew as the dynamism of the exchange created a new level of understanding – a possibility for new discernment and new solutions. We became more aware of the use of the Grail name by groups with other values and purposes. This raised interesting themes to be discussed further at the European Grail Congress in 2010.

*Dear God,
We loosen our grip.
We open our hand.
We are accepting.
In our empty hand
We feel the shape
Of simple eternity.
It nestles there.
We hold it gently.
We are accepting.
Amen.*

(Michael Leunig, "When I Talk To You — A Cartoonist Tales To God")

Country Reports

GERMANY, ITALY, AND THE NETHERLANDS NLTS MEET

The National Leadership Teams (NLTs) of Germany, Italy and the Netherlands met in Braulins, Italy from May 9 - May 17, 2009. Present were: Silvana Ferraguti, Christa Werner, and Edeltraud Zörkler of Germany; Elly König, Didine Petit, Carla van Thiel, Joke Poot, and Hermien van Sloten from the Netherlands; and Chiara Germondari, Gemma di Marino, and Claudia Poggi of Italy.

On Monday, May 11 the group convened with Elly as chairperson to decide the program of the week and the daily schedule.

On Monday afternoon each of us answered these questions presented by the Dutch group: Which people are most important for you? What kind of work do you do (or have you done)? What kind of volunteer work? What are your hobbies? What inspires you? We all read everyone's answers then we divided into three groups for translation and further questioning.

On Tuesday morning, May 12 the German group proposed the following questions about the organization of the Grail in different countries, which were answered by each country group: Which groups exist in your country? Does your country have a center? Number and age of members? National Leadership Team? Legal form?

In the afternoon, after telling a beautiful story about the singing elephant, Christa asked each country to discuss their strengths and weaknesses as well as how the strengths are stimulated to grow by actions and projects and how the weaknesses and challenges are met.

Wednesday, May 13 was a day of sightseeing to Aquileia and Grado.

On Thursday, May 14 the Italian group gave an introduction about the first Txintxa (pronounce "chin cha") paper that they wrote and was recently distributed among all Grail members worldwide. The studies were done between the fall of 2007 and December 2008 by two subgroups: Pia, Marina, Claudia and a friend of Marina studied early Christianity. Gemma, Antonella, Anita Saisi, Anita

Cappello, and Juci studied the feminist theology of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. The final version of the paper entitled *Research on Our Christian Origins*, was prepared by Anita after she came back from the 2007 Spirituality Forum. Marina summarized the text in six pages and someone else did the translation.

In the afternoon, Carla gave a summary of the first chapter of Gordon Lynch's book, *The New Spirituality*, which was been discussed by the Dutch general assembly in April 2009 under the guidance of Christa Anbeek.

The Italian group asked each of us to make a drawing of how we see Europe at this moment and then to divide into two groups. We exchanged our visions in the groups and then each group made a collage showing a unified image.

Friday, May 15 was a day of sightseeing in Venice for Elly, Didine and Hermien and on the lakes at the border of Slovenia for the rest of the group.

On Saturday morning, May 16 Didine talked about the European Grail meeting of 2010. The meeting in Benediktbeuern 2008 developed the following action points: 1) Immigration (Elly König), 2) Women's Rights (Marita Estor), 3) Anti discrimination (Traude Rebmann).

A possible European Formation meeting was suggested because there were already formation programs for Spanish/Portuguese speaking countries and for East Africa (in English).

We also brainstormed about how we can apply Grail values to our time. There are a lot of organizations similar to the Grail. What can the Grail offer that others don't offer? Support single women with children? Help the dying? Provide personal growth opportunities? Offer a place for people who do not find a home in the church anymore? Every country has its own needs. A lot has been tried and done by Grail groups and individual Grail members. We will continue what we are already doing.

Evaluation

The program was rather intensive, but interesting and fruitful. The tourist trips were very special. It was good to be together and learn to know each other in a different way. We did not plan another meeting together, since we will meet each other in the European meeting in 2010 and at future international meetings.

Hermien van Sloten

GERMANY

The German Grail has approached the complex reality of spirituality in some of our regional and national meetings. In our exchanges we discovered that we are very interested in mysticism.

A small group planned a program in the convent of St. Mary, a monastery of Cistercian Nuns in the Diocese of Magdeburg, in Helfta, East Germany. After being abandoned for 450 years, new life began in this very old place on the request of local people soon after the reunion of Germany in 1989. In 1999 some accommodations were ready to welcome Sr. M. Assumpta and 7 nuns of her convent in Seligenthal/Bavaria. In 2009, twenty-seven Grail women and friends spent a long weekend in this quiet and beautiful setting surrounding a small lake. The task of the convent is to create a place where God is loved and praised and where his love is shared with everybody who comes to Helfta.

We learned about three women mystics who had lived in Helfta in the 13th century: Mechthild von Magdeburg (1207 – 1282), Mechthild von Hakeborn (1241 – 1299) and Gertrud von Helfta (1256 – 1303). These women had the special grace of the divine presence in their souls. They experienced God's unconditional, overwhelming love, his peace and joy and encouragement to share this experience. They found a new language for their prayers. They described their relationship with God in terms of courtly love songs (Minnelieder). They used natural images to express the inexplicable connectedness with the divine presence. Here follows my translation of one of Gertrud's prayers:

*You, Life of my soul,
You are the beauty and richness of all colors
The sweetness of all pleasant tastes
The most pleasant scent of all fragrances,
The most perfect harmony of all sounds...
The most skillful craftsman,
The mildest teacher,
The best counselor of wisdom,
The kindest helper
The most devoted friend. (III.46; L 171)*

Sr. Maria Assumpta Schenk, the abbess of the convent, told us the story of the three holy women in the context of the Christian tradition in the 13th century. She read excerpts of the written testimonies that were passed on to our time. She herself with her convent is passing on this wisdom today. Our program provided space for our participation in some of the canonical hours in the church and for

contributions of Grail members.

Gerda Kaufmann

KENYA

Women can do great things, can make the world a better place for every one. Heather Ball, Writer.

The Grail in Kitale is actively working with ordinary women and girls to uplift their living standards economically by running tailoring classes and a sustainable agriculture program based on the use of organic manure. Such ordinary women wake up at the crack of dawn to carry out their house work chores, prepare their children for school, and go to the garden. These women are leaders shaping the future and making leaders of tomorrow. The Grail in Kitale works with them. When such women take leadership, they share their knowledge with other women and society in general.

At the Kitale Grail Centre they show girls through their leadership that women can actively contribute to their family and society's welfare and give them direction to a better future. Successful girls aspire to pursue careers of service. They want to become good leaders and nurture others in turn, in all levels of life to become the best doctors, lawyers, athletes, ministers, tailors, small scale farmers, and road builders possible.

A woman is a leader, from organizing her home by ensuring it runs smoothly to making decisions at high spiritual, economical and political levels. More women are becoming more assertive and demanding respect from society. It is time for women to grow out of the comforts of our cultural cocoons and move on with the times embracing positive reforms that can only be for the betterment of society and the world at large.

Elemina Musundi

MOZAMBIQUE

English version:

Conversas de Sexta (Friday's Debates) is a program that GRAIL Mozambique has been carrying out since 1997, with the purpose of providing a forum for discussion of current national and international ideas, phenomena, and events of social, religious, economic, cultural, or scientific nature. It's goal is also to develop among Grail participants and other women initiative, observation and analysis, as well as organizational and management skills.

Major domestic, regional and international events

have been our main source of inspiration in the selection of the themes for Conversas de Sexta. For Mozambicans 2009 is a special year during which we will have presidential, legislative and provincial assemblies' elections, thus it is a special moment to raise that sense of analysis and debate of ideas. The group in charge for the organization of the activity is variable, to instill that organizational capacity within the group. This year Augusta Malite, Yolanda Mulhuini, Manuesse Mocumbi, and Manuela Muianga are members of the group. There is always someone more experienced that ensures the transmission of information, a legacy left by Maria Carlos during the time she was with us. Each member of the group is responsible for a given month, to prepare all relevant logistics (contact the speakers, prepare the invitations and facilitate the session). All the other members of the group contribute proposals of themes and key note speakers.

This year's season of Conversas de Sexta started in March and shall continue until October.

March: The Financial Crisis

In March, the focus was the global financial crisis. The discussion enabled us to accurately understand its key features and impacts at global and national levels. There were indeed people who said that only after these two debates at the Grail on the financial crisis that they could understand it. The key note speakers are indeed to be commended for the simple and clear presentation of the theme.

The initial assessment of our Government was that the impacts of this crisis would not be felt in our country but the debate was an important moment in which we could understand through obvious examples that we would be affected and now the Government has publicly informed that the crisis is affecting us.

April: Looking into the Regional Integration in Mozambique

Mozambique has been in the regional integration process since 2002 and it has many challenges. For instance, the abolition of visas is already a reality and without any doubt is a major added value but, at the same time, it causes a major challenge with regard to control of movements of criminals from one place to another. This was the focus of the debate and it raised several aspects that, without any doubt, will affect our daily lives in the near future, and about which the society at large is not duly informed.

May: Climate Changes

In May we turned our attentions to the planet Earth

to talk about climate change, a global issue that affects each one of our countries in particular. With its geographical location and climate variability, Mozambique has already been feeling its effects. The key note speakers managed very well to contextualize the issue and analyze the type of scenarios we expect if we do not prepare ourselves to reduce its impact or in last instance cope with it. At the end of the debate an appeal was made to raise awareness and change our attitudes towards the environment.

The major challenge is to ensure that Conversas de Sexta ("Friday's Debates") continues and, above all, multiplies throughout this vast country thus raising the knowledge and awareness of Mozambicans. Upcoming topics are: June -- *The Education system in Mozambique*; July -- *Lynching in Mozambique*; August -- *Micro-finances and their impact in the society*; September -- *Mega projects in Mozambique*; October -- *Municipalities and the Civil society*.

Benvinda Tamele

Group of Conversa de Sexta (GRAIL Mozambique)

Portuguese version:

As conversas de Sexta são um programa que o GRAAL Moçambique já desenvolve desde 1997, e que tem como objectivo final criar um espaço de discussão de idéias, fenómenos e acontecimentos actuais, nacionais e (ou) internacionais, de carácter social, religioso, económico, cultural, científico bem como desenvolver nas participantes do Graal e outras mulheres ligadas à actividade, capacidade de iniciativas, observação e análise da realidade (p.e. na identificação de temas), de organização e de gestão de actividades.

Os grandes acontecimentos nacionais, regionais e internacionais tem servido como nossa fonte de inspiração suprema na escolha dos grandes temas a serem reflectidos nas Conversas. O ano de 2009 é para os moçambicanos um ano especial, por se tratar de um período em que teremos eleições presidenciais, legislativas e provinciais, sendo por isso um momento especial para elevar esse sentido de análise e debate de idéias. O grupo responsável pela organização das conversas é variável, uma vez que é também importante que se crie essa capacidade organizativa no seio do grupo, por exemplo este ano fazem parte desse grupo: Augusta Malite, Yolanda Mulhuini, Manuesse Mocumbi e Manuela Muianga. É importante notar que há sempre alguém com mais experiência que deve garantir a passagem de informação e este é um testemunho e aprendizado que nos foi sábiamente deixado pela Maria Carlos

durante o tempo que conosco conviveu. Por outro lado, todo o resto do grupo contribui com propostas de temas e oradores. Cada membro do grupo responsável pelas Conversas é responsável por determinado mês e nesse sentido tem que preparar toda a logística (contactar os oradores, preparar os convites e orientar a sessão).

A temporada de Conversas para este ano iniciou em Março e prolongar-se-á até Outubro e os temas identificados foram:

Março: A Crise financeira...

Conversar sobre a crise financeira foi um privilégio, pois permitiu-nos perceber de facto os contornos da mesma e os impactos que está tendo a nível mundial como nacional. Houve de facto quem dissesse que só depois destas duas conversas no Graal sobre a crise financeira é que ficou a perceber-la. Os oradores estão de facto de parabéns pela abordagem simples e clara do tema.

A temporada de Conversas para este ano iniciou em Março e prolongar-se-á até Outubro e os temas identificados foram:

Abril: "Olhando para a Integração Regional em Moçambique..."

Moçambique está já em processo de integração regional e que tem estado a trazer vários desafios, uma vez que a mesma já está em curso desde XXXX. Contudo, sentimos que a sociedade está muito pouco informada sobre a mesma e sobre as implicações que vai ter sobre o dia-a-dia de todos e em particular dos moçambicanos. A abolição de vistos é já uma realidade, e é sem sombra de dúvidas uma grande mais valia, mas ao mesmo tempo coloca-se um grande desafio em relação ao controle de movimentos dos criminosos que circulam de um lado para o outro.

Maior: Mudanças climáticas.....

Em Maio viramos as atenções para o planeta terra, para falarmos sobre as mudanças climáticas que é um assunto da agenda global, mas que toca em particular a cada um dos nossos países. Devido principalmente a sua localização geográfica, e variabilidade climática, Moçambique já têm estado a sentir os seus efeitos. Os oradores souberam e muito bem contextualizar o problema e fazer uma análise sobre o tipo de cenários que nos esperam caso não nos preparemos para reduzir o seu impacto ou em última instância conviver com ele....No final deixaram o apelo em relação à tomada de consciência e mudança de atitude em relação a relação que cada um de nós tem com o

ambiente.

O desafio maior é fazer com que este espaço continue, mas acima de tudo que se multiplique por este vasto país e contribua para elevar o conhecimento e consciência dos moçambicanos.

Junho: O Sistema de educação em Moçambique;
Julho: Os linchamentos em Moçambique; Agosto: As microfinanças e o seu impacto na sociedade;
Setembro: Os mega projectos em Moçambique;
Outubro: Municípios e sociedade civil.

Pelo grupo das Conversas de Sexta (GRAAL Moçambique)

Benvinda Tamele

PHILIPPINES

We had the Paglaum (Youth Group) Meeting/Seminar, National Meeting, and Commitment Ceremony for 4 new members between April 26 and May 2, 2009. I was in the Commitment Ceremony and shared about the International Grail Structures, elections, Networks, etc. Dipolog participants in the youth group did not attend due to the bridge bombing in Iligan City. I went by bus. When we passed by Lanao del Norte, I was very frightened to see the Military all over the place. We could not pass on the bombed bridge, so we took the old one. I was so frightened that I returned by airplane. Thanks be to God, I arrived home safely. Thanks to Jeanette Loazon and Adelberta who were very involved in the preparation and in the activities. All the activities were successful and fruitful.

Joy Pastor

SWEDEN

A Grail pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela

Participants from Sweden: Kerstin Jacobsson, Bibi Helgesson, Karin Beskow, Anne Palmer, Kristiina Krank, Anna Stenkvist, Satu Heikkinen. From other Grail-groups: Pia Zuccolin (Italy), Bonnie Hendricks (USA), Marion van der Akker-Gerritsen (Holland) and Ina Conradie (South Africa).

O Camino - The road: The group gathered in a small village called Ligonde some 80 km from Santiago de Compostela. We wanted this pilgrimage to be both an inner and an outer journey, so we chose to stay over night in small peaceful hostels, sometimes off the road. We walked an average of 20 km per day, carrying our own luggage. We set off early in the morning when the mist still lay gently on the

meadows. On the green rolling hills of Galicia we passed little creeks, forests of oak or eucalyptus, foxglove and other flowers. Bonnie opened our senses to the fact that we were walking on something alive, Mother Earth. We used this prayer from Iona, Scotland:

*As the light of dawn awakens Earth's creatures
and stirs into song the birds of the morning
so may I be brought to life this day.
Rising to see the light
to hear the wind
to smell the fragrance of what grows from the ground
to taste its fruit
and touch its textures
so may my inner senses be awakened to you, O God.*

Now and then we passed old villages and small cities. On day 5 we arrived to Santiago de Compostela and attended the Mass in the Cathedral. After that the group split up. Some went back home and others (7 persons) took the bus away from the bustling city life and up to the mountains and the monastery, Monasterio Cisterciense de Santa Maria de Sobrado, where brother Carlos, a friend of the Grail, lives. The monastery is situated along O Camino Norte, a road for pilgrims coming from the North. In Sobrado, Ana Oom from Portugal joined us.

The rhythm: Walking 45 minutes and resting 15. We shared the responsibility of being pathfinders, meaning that you have to pay close attention to the yellow arrows indicating the direction and responsibility to find a pace that suited every one. We also had someone walking last, making sure that no one was left behind. Every distance started and ended in a circle where we prayed with the words of Saint Bridget (Birgitta): *"God, show me your way and make me willing to walk it."* Every second time we walked in silence and we were surprised how much energy it gave us! During the breaks we had coffee in a café in a village, reflected on the theme or did exercises of body awareness (yoga, Tai Chi, massage).

The memories:

We had a wonderful meal in Santiago on Midsummers Eve – the brightest day of the year and much celebrated in Sweden. We sung, drank sangria and celebrated that we actually made it to Santiago! We shared earplugs when guests of the hostel snored too much...

We celebrated our own pilgrims mass in a little garden along the way (**P's 23**).

We were obsessed with our poor feet and sore muscles.

We praised Pia for her phone calls in Spanish to

confirm our bookings.

We shared experiences and insights so intensely that the kilometers vanished beneath our feet.

We created strong links of friendship.

The Monastery - an ecumenical breakthrough

The monks in Sobrado live according to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, which means an unusual openness towards other Churches and religions.

This week the Protestants among us were welcome to receive the bread and wine of the Eucharist, the following week a group of Sufis were to come. In this environment we experience a home coming for us as an ecumenical group!

We will not forget: the friendly faces of the monks, the wonderful meals, the Hours of the Office beautifully sung six times a day, our reflections in the garden, the walking meditation we did in the cloister, the guiding and the time spent with our dear friend Carlos, the many corridors and courtyards and how we got lost all the time... But maybe the most extraordinary moment was when we got invited by the prior (also named Carlos) to meet the chapter and to talk about us and the Grail! Bibi decided to make the ecumenical character of the Grail visible and put her black clerical shirt on. Kerstin was seated on the "throne" of the prior. All these men dressed in cloaks and seated in impressive chairs made us slightly nervous, but we decided not to duck, but to fill the room with our presence and visions. One monk (Lorentz) helped us with translating English to Spanish. After 30 minutes we were supposed to go to church for night prayer, but the discussion was so good that the prior cancelled the service in the church and the many questions continued for another half an hour! We closed the evening with a prayer and the prior looked up a particular text and asked us to read. Pia read in Spanish: *27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Gal 3:27-29).*

The Theme – The Human and the Creation

When I read about the creation in seven days (**Gen 1**) I tend to quickly pass over how the different species came about in order to quickly reach the climax, the creation of man and woman. Walking with a geological perspective showed me that I must learn to slow down. ...None of us would be here if it had not been for a little creature called the cyanobacteria (or the blue-green algae). It has lived in the ocean for 5/6 of the time of the 4 billion year history of our planet. 3.5 billion years ago it invented photosynthesis and

started slowly to release oxygen (a by-product!) into the atmosphere, and so created conditions for life as we know it. One day we walked the history of our planet and it turned out to be homage to the silent work of the cyanobacteria!

A comparison between the History of the Earth (4 billion years) and one days' walk (25 km) along the road to Santiago:

At the break of dawn we read **Gen 1:2** about darkness and the wind of God (*ruah* in Hebrew, the feminine aspect of God) hovering over the deep waters. We added the creation story of **Proverbs 8:22 -31** where Sophia, the Wisdom of God is the main character. At the first break photosynthesis is at work. By lunch time (12.5 km), we find algae and simple forms of life in the ocean. Late in the afternoon (after 22 km) life moved up onto land. 10 metres before reaching the hostel in Arzua, we meet the first hominoides and 9.5 metres later, we find a Homo Sapiens. Jesus Christ is born 1 cm from the door step and a 40-year old woman, 0.4 mm before entering the house. The obvious question is: what is the role of humans in creation? Or, to quote the Bible: *When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers... what is the human that you care for her? You made humans ruler over the works of your hands. (Ps 8)*

The creation story in **Gen. 1** give us the right perspectives – humans are latecomers! – but the command to fill the Earth and subdue it needs reinterpretation! The next creation story provides alternatives.

In **Gen 2** (older and separate from **Gen 1**), the starting point is the desert. Eden, is the vulnerable garden in its midst. (A relevant picture of a world with an increasing shortage of drinking water!) In this world, life is more fragile, and the task set before its inhabitants is not “to subdue” (**Gen 1:28**), but to “work and take care of it” (**Gen 2:15**).

Gen 2 underlines the interconnectedness of creation: the human (*adam*, masculine in Hebrew) is created from soil in the ground (*adamah*, is feminine). With the homicide of Abel, violence is introduced and the Earth cries (**Gen 4:10**).

Sin as broken relations: the Earth – men/women; rich/poor people; division of Churches and religions? In a fourth creation story in the Bible (**John 1**), God takes into account human sin and the need for reconciliation and sends his Son to us. How are we to share the resources? There is an urgent need for peace and justice in our spirituality!

We also talked about:

- The problems of a human centered world view.
- What makes us different from the animals – responsibility and search for knowledge (**Gen 3**).
- The cyanobacteria teaches us trust. Life in universe is an intricate web and we are part of it! The altarpiece in the church in Vilar de Donas shows that God holds the Earth in his hands!
- God is the beginning (alpha), but also the end (omega). God meets us from the future.

Bibi Helgesson

UNITED STATES

US Grail Begins Movement Building Work for the Future.

During the past 5 years, the US Grail leadership has been challenged to find a balance between responsible management into a hopeful future and dealing with diminished energy and growth of the movement in the US. We have had an inspired past and long years of growth and exciting works as we have journeyed our path. We have come to understand that our current situation of a mature membership has wonderful strengths, even as it makes connecting with young women more difficult. We have worked hard with our entire membership these past years to face some realities about limited membership growth and participation as well as financial difficulties in maintaining centers with aging buildings.

With this issue of Crossroads we have just emerged from a process of envisioning a scenario for the future that has now been focused into a strategic plan. It has been a long, participatory process, involving members through meetings, surveys, conference calls, and group discussions in many regions of the country that has resulted in much clarification and shared learning. The resulting *Movement-Building Scenario and Strategic Plan* expresses a renewed commitment to our vision and mission, with a new focus on growing the Grail. Implementation of the plan will require new efforts to streamline planning and decision-making, make use of paid staff, and grow and activate our membership. We have affirmed our Centers as a “treasure “ of the US Grail, and appreciate that they are an integral piece in building the future that will require inspired management, as well as renewed commitment and support from our members.

We are now in a phase of implementing our Movement-Building Scenario. We look forward to hiring a National Director soon and working with her on our plans to grow membership, renew member participation, increase financial support

from members and other sources, and develop programs and projects in support of our mission. We will soon be electing new Council leadership and are encouraged by the wonderful women who are stepping forward to continue the work of building the future. We have made the commitment to grow the Grail in the US and to envision a way forward, so that the Grail in the US can responsibly and enthusiastically partner with our Grail sisters around the world to bring about the change that we envision.

We ask that you keep us in your hearts and hope that the work we have done and will continue, will bear much fruit. If you would like more information about our planning process or our strategic plan, contact the National Office NLT@grail-us.org

Beth Wasmer for the US NLT

Donna Ambrogi: Patient Advocate

Grail member, Donna Ambrogi is one of the founders of the patient-advocacy program at Pilgrim Place, the retirement community in Claremont, California where 11 Grail members live.

The program began in 2003 when 3 members of the community's Health and Welfare committee organized a workshop based on the work of Dr. Marie Savard, a nationally renowned physician who recommends "health buddies" for retired-aged patients. Program organizers call them "patient advocates" (PA) to reflect the specific nature of their work, assisting other residents in their role as patients.

A key PA focus is to assist a patient in communicating with healthcare providers. Their duties include preparing the patient for appointments, taking notes in the examining room, helping the patient debrief after the visit, and sometimes alerting family members on new developments. By assisting in assembling the patient's health information, symptom, and questions, the PA helps ensure that the appointment runs smoothly and effectively.

The need for advocates stems from the shortness of appointments—sometimes only five minutes with a specialist—and from problems with patients' retention of what doctors say. "Studies have shown that when patients get into a doctor's office—they forget one-third to one-half of what they want to tell the doctor, as well as MUCH OF what the doctor says back," says one advocate. "Also, the more serious news the doctor gives, the less the patient remembers."

"Doctors tend to be much happier when there's somebody with the patient," Donna adds. "They

want the patient to hear the instructions, and comply with them. The patients also tend to be happier. They have less anxiety when someone is there with them, remembering their questions."

Those involved with the program attribute its success to the special character of Pilgrim Place, a retirement community for people who have spent at least 15 years of full-time work in a religious or charitable organization. Pilgrim Place is an "intentional community" whose residents care for and about one another and about the world. All current residents had been involved in some kind of Christian service, and as a group worked in more than 54 countries.

Pilgrim Place PA's are persons with a "particular sensitivity," says Donna. "They must have a willingness to be trained and to take on extra responsibility."

"Because we know everybody," says Donna "and have this intention of being part of a community, it makes us willing to take on a very intimate role as advocate." Other Grail members who are currently serving as patient advocates are Barbara Troxell, Teresa Wilson and Duanne Welsch.

Mary Gindhart

In Loving Memory

HILDE WAILERSBACHER (GERMANY) 1922-2009

Gone home – on the path to eternal life

Gone home – fulfillment in God's presence.

Everyone who came through the Grail Centers in Mülheim and before that in Münster in the last 46 years, was welcomed by the radiant smile, the open heart and the honest interest of the deeply spiritual woman, Hilde Wailersbacher.

She was a gentle and strong Grail nucleus member. Until Easter this year, in the 88th year of her life, she readily accepted the tasks that being in the Grail Center asked of her. She followed with an open and critical mind the signs of the time, the life of the church and the affairs of the Grail in the world. The Lord called her to eternal life in the presence of Elisabeth Fesser and Cläre Pfeifer, on Trinity Sunday, June 7, 2009 at 6 PM.

In spite of the tremendous loss and the painful departure, we, the Grail women in Germany are grateful to God, for her wonderful life, for the way she lived with us, for her many contributions and for the grace of a peaceful death. Resurrection Mass in

her memory was celebrated on Friday, June 12, 2009 in the Carmel Church in Duisburg, followed by the burial in the Mülheim-Speldorf cemetery.

Christa Werner, for the Leadership Team and the entire Grail in Germany

MAMA SOPHIA FRANZ (TANZANIA) 1914-2009

With the Grail in Tanzania, we grieve the death of Mama Sophia Franz, the mother of both Honorata and Romana Mvungi. Mama Sophia passed from this life on May 29, 2009 at the age of 95 years.



She was born in the Pare Mountains in the first generation after Catholic missionaries came to the region and before the Grail was founded in Holland. As she grew, she became a woman of faith, a wife and mother who led her children and grandchildren to seek faith. She was a member of Kilomeni Parish, the oldest parish in the diocese. She learned to read and write when she was an adult and encouraged her children to get schooling.

Mama Sophia encouraged her oldest daughter Honoratha to enter a training course for catechetics at the diocesan school located at Kisekibaha. Soon after, Honoratha became the first young woman from the region to join the Grail women then working in Moshi. (When the catechetical school closed, the buildings were offered to the Grail and our beloved Kisekibaha Grail Center was born!) With the prayer and support of their mother, another daughter, Romana, followed Honoratha into the Grail. Mama Sophia supported the Grail's goal to build the faith that would improve the lives of women. She visited the Grail Center from time to time when she passed by on market days and she danced at many Grail celebrations. Over the years, Mama Sophia welcomed dozens of Grail visitors from around the world to her home on the mountainside overlooking Kisekibaha. In the last year, even when she was too frail to walk easily, she still would beat time to music as soon as the women began to sing. Mama Sophia was a woman of wisdom, faith, intelligence, and unending hospitality. May our Lord receive her into Eternal Life.

*Marian April Goering with Leni Schaareman
and Frances Martin*

THOMAS BERRY (UNITED STATES)

Thomas Berry whose vision and wisdom has inspired the Grail's work to live in harmony with the

Earth died on June 1, 2009 having finished his own irreplaceable part of the "Great Work". *The Great Work* was the title of one of his books in which he suggests that each of us has a great work to do in bringing our planet out of the destructive forces of our present age and into a harmonious relationship with the natural world for the sake of the future. We are filled with gratitude for the depth, breadth and magnanimity of his soul. Thomas was a Catholic priest and a member of the Passionist Order.

Announcements

■ 2010 European Grail Meeting

The 2010 European Grail Meeting will take place from the 15 to 22 August 2010 at the Franciscan Formation Center, Maison Notre Dame du Chant d'Oiseau, Avenue des Franciscains 3 A, 1150 Bruxelles. Close to a big green park, the center is 20 minutes from the center of Brussels. Website: www.chant-oiseau.be.

The meeting will be planned by representatives of each European Grail country and the coordinators of the actions following the 2008 European Grail meeting: Marita Estor (Women Rights), Traude Rebmann (Anti-discrimination) and Elly König (Immigration). We hope many European Grail members can attend for this week. An official invitation will be sent when the program plan is made.

Didine Petit, Patricia Camisao, Robin Sclafani, and Elly König

■ Stand Up and Take Action to End Poverty Now, October 16-18, 2009

For the fourth year in a row, millions of people around the world will Stand Up and Take Action to show their support for the fight against poverty and for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Wherever you are -- alone, in a Grail group or as part of an organization -- choose a moment in these three days to physically and intentionally Stand Up and Take Action. October 16th, 17th and 18th, 2009, from 12 a.m. GMT on October 16 to 11.59 p.m. GMT on October 18. Download information at www.standagainstopoverty.org. Let Mary Kay Louchart at grail-ipt@juno.com know what you and your Grail group plan to do.