CROSSROADS

A Newsletter of The Grail International Leadership Team

July 2011

From speech by Under-Secretary-General and UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet during the UN Women Launch Celebration held in the General Assembly Hall at UN Headquarters on 24 February 2011.

…The decision to establish UN Women reflects global concern with the slow pace of change. It is no longer acceptable to live in a world where young girls are taken out of school and forced into early marriage, where women's employment opportunities are limited, and where the threat of gender-based violence is a daily reality — at home, in the street, at school and at work.

The neglect of women's rights means the social and economic potential of half the population is underused. In order to tap this potential, we must open up spaces for women in political leadership, in science and technology, as trade and peace negotiators, and as heads of corporations…

This is not an issue confined to any one group of countries or societies. It is a universal issue. We must convince all political actors — including ministers of finance and trade as well as health and education — that we are not only talking about rights, we are talking about social vitality, political stability, and economic growth….

In addition to our role of mobilizing, coordinating and leveraging the efforts of others, UN Women will focus on five areas:

1) Expanding women's voice, leadership and participation;
2) Ending violence against women;
3) Strengthening women's full participation in conflict resolution and peace processes;
4) Enhancing women's economic empowerment; and
5) Ensuring gender priorities are reflected in national plans and budgets, including capacity to support CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women) reporting.

I am determined that UN Women will offer a new dynamic to the global dialogue on gender equality, and bring new energy, drawing on multiple talents, and bringing together men and women from different countries and communities in a shared endeavor.

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Deadline for the next Crossroads — *November 1, 2011.*
Please send to Mary Gindhart at mgindhart@verizon.net. Thank you.

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LETTER FROM THE INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM, JUNE 2011

In a time when natural catastrophes, nuclear disasters, refugee misery, heavy war chaos, hunger and exploitation shock humankind — a time when a new self confidence with hope for a better future in freedom and peace urge people to risk their lives in demonstrations — in days of insecurity and fear, the Grail dares to plan an International General Assembly with the theme: *"She changes everything she touches"*

The theme, which comes from an English song, was accepted by everyone on the IGA preparation team in Rubaga, Uganda not out of a sarcastic mood, not as a sign of despair, but in the knowledge and hope that we, the women of the Grail, have the mission to change the world into a better place and to stand for hope and meaning in life. We want to give witness through a simple life, a radical sharing in the struggles of the poor, and work for peace and justice that grow out of the depths of our faith.

From January 30th to February 5th 2011, 11 Grail women from 7 countries participated in a lively exchange and in real listening to each other, to take up the essential themes of the Grail and prepared a draft programme for the IGA in South Africa. The guidance of Carol Webb and the readiness of the team made it possible to go through all themes, divide important tasks, and communicate results before the colourful, joyous closing service in the Grail house. Heartfelt gratitude goes to the Grail in Uganda, who made our stay so wonderful and enjoyable in all ways. The IGA preparation team experienced their excellent hospitality (a well-known Grail virtue).

The preparatory papers for the IGA were distributed to all contact persons and deadlines for reactions were announced. Every group is challenged to concentrate on the questions and suggestions on:

- TXINTXA topics and continuation
- International exchange with all chances and challenges
- VISION draft statement according to phrases and contents
- Networks and their importance within the International Grail
- Formation and the revised common elements produced by the Pirapora team (Also discussed in the edition of this CROSSROADS. *See pages 4-15.*)

Each country selected two IGA delegates, and IGA representatives were chosen from the Networks, the TXINTXA workgroup, the Vision team, and the International Formation group. Names have been sent to the Grail International Secretariat in Utrecht. Mary Omedo, the Administrative Assistant of the International Secretariat since 1 February 2011, will send the invitation, and Mieneke Hage — as always — will deal with finances. Early flight bookings to Cape Town will ease the workload and secure a cheaper transport.

We invite every single member to join in the IGA process guided by the Holy Spirit and carried by our common prayer. We do hope it will be an assembly for claiming our common identity while recognizing our diversity that will help the Grail to grow in numbers and spiritual depth.

While in Rubaga, we, the ILT, used the chance to meet on other subjects including: financial requests, plans for international exchanges, management of the Higher Education Fund, and plans for the coming year. We heard reports on the wonderful, inspiring celebration of the 35th anniversary of the Grail in the Philippines November 5th – 8th, 2010 (Christa Werner and Joke van Nerven attended) and programmes from the Grail in Portugal, facilitated by Carol Webb. After the meeting in Kampala, Grail women from Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania attended a course on strategic planning offered by Carol Webb.

The Grail in Mozambique is inviting participants in the IGA to attend the 25th anniversary celebration of the Grail in Mozambique from September 24 to 26, 2011, which will be a unique opportunity to travel to Maputo.

Finally, our gratitude goes to Loek Goemans assisting for four weeks in the international finance office early this year — and in a special way to Hermien van Sloten for her efficient and faithful service as International Administrative Assistant. The gentle and friendly management of the office was exemplary for all times and all women following. Mary Omedo, now in charge, is very welcome in the International Secretariat in Utrecht!

Love and best wishes.

Cristina dos Anjos Conceicao, Carol Webb, Christa Werner

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) as a Place of Grail Formation?

by Mary Kay Louchart, International Formation Team, United States

Why do I say that? Are there talks on the Grail? Only informally as someone asks a question.

Are the participants in CSW women who want to explore Grail membership? Not necessarily but sometimes they are.

Do they represent the Grail at the CSW sessions? Yes…and for that we provide them with a flyer on the Grail, give an overview of how the Grail got involved in the UN (starting with UFER), and tell them that when they stand to talk they introduce themselves as so-and-so from the Grail (this is because everyone present represents an NGO and need to identify themselves as such).

Well, you're not convinced why I call this formation? What do we do? For a starter—a big one—for those from outside of New York City, we live together. We are a community for the one or two weeks that we are here (Some come for one, some for two weeks). We eat dinner together. We pray before the meal—in different languages when we have a diverse group. We hang out in the hall waiting our turn in the bathroom and chat with the others about the day, our lives, and, yes, sometimes even the Grail. We do dishes together, sometimes singing. (Does that ring any bells with those of us who have been around for a while?) We look at what is happening at CSW the next day and make a plan what to attend. We take an afternoon to the Grail in Cornwall—of course there we talk about the Grail! In the Bronx, we meet the Grail women and girls from our Grail Girls Group and get to know something of the work in the Bronx. During the CSW, we discuss and get angry about issues that violate women and girls, that are against justice, and that are killing our beautiful earth. Isn't that what we do in a Grail formation program? We address issues of justice? And at the CSW, whenever possible, our participants are part of a panel or workshop. They make interventions—they are taking leadership.

Two of the things that we lament in the Grail are that there just isn't time in this era to have bonding experiences like some of us had—important experiences that nurtured us into the Grail, and, an opportunity to work together. CSW is one way to have those opportunities. Yes, it's short term, but it's powerful. I remember when I was in the Year School at Grailville in the 1960s, the point was not just to 'get' more Grail members but to open the world to young women, broaden and deepen their vision, let them know the possibilities available to them, and develop leadership. As you read excerpts below from the responses of some the girls, you'll see that this Grail experience of CSW is offering that.

Maddie Delgado (left) and Leymah Roberta Gbowee
(*Photo by Mary Kay Delgado*)

Maddie Delgado (16 years old, Loveland, Ohio—her mom is Grail member, Mary Kay Delgado) "This unique experience has given me a chance to voice my opinion about the various issues that girls are faced with today. I was shocked by some of the struggles that girls around the world face each day." *(Maddie is pictured here with Leymah Roberta Gbowee, who gave a keynote speech at the Youth Orientation. Leyman was in the film: Pray The Devil Back To Hell.)*

Alice Ferro
(Photo by Maddie Delgado)

Lena Cheyne (16 years old, Washingtonville, NY — her mom, Cindy Cheyne, is exploring Grail membership) "The CSW 55 was an amazing experience. I am grateful for the opportunity to be able to meet so many interesting people, and I have made so many new friends. Coming from a small town in the United States I could never imagine what some of these young women have to go through on a daily basis. Going to CSW-55 it has shown me how people in my life, including myself, take for granted all the freedom and access to life-changing opportunities." *(See photo page 5.)*

Alice Ferro (16 years old, Italy—her mom is Grail member, Marina Sangalli) "This type of experience gave me the opportunity to hear new stories and to

make my voice heard about my life and the Italian reality. On the 19th I'll have a presentation at my school about the CSW-55 and I'm very excited!!! I miss so much the whole New York life... I miss the stairs too!!! All the week made an impact on me... it was a beautiful experience. Thank you so much."

Mayte Vidal (24 years old, Mexico) "Attending the CSW in 2011 was a great learning experience. In the Grail in Mexico we are not alone. The Grail is in many countries working for a better life for all. I affirmed my own conviction to work, taking responsibility without cowardice. From a cultural dimension, we could not understand all the words, but there was another language: communication through looks, smiles, hugs, voice modulation, showing empathy and solidarity. We learned a lot about structural conditions that oppress people but we saw seeds of hope, of responsibility among different women of all ages and sectors. The girls' testimonies made a great impression on me. Finally, I want to say that seeing so many women together, I thought also that we should not forget men's participation in transforming the world as it is also their responsibility."

Leonor Vincent (left), Lena Cheyne from New York and Mayte Vidal. (*Photo by Leonor Vicente)*

Two of the Catholic Girls High Schools in the Bronx have been participating in the CSW for the past two years. Meet a few of them from Academy of Mt. St. Ursula in the Bronx:

Uloaku Ireaja (17 years old) "Meeting such inspiring women really helped in putting into a better perspective why we as a sisterhood community should be taking part in this movement. I learned I need to be thankful for the education and resources available to me that other girls around the world have probably no notion of, and in knowing this I need to find a way to use what I know and what is available to me to help as much as I can. Thank You."

Uloaku Ireaja *(Photo by Sr. Alice Marie Giordano)*

Chloe Geigel (left) and Arbenita Misini *(photo by Sr. Alice Marie Giordano)*

Chloe Geigel (17 years old) "The speech by Michelle Bachelet truly inspired me. After hearing her I felt proud to be a young woman. I am truly grateful to be a woman in today's era. I am able to express myself however I like and become whatever I want. Unfortunately, many other young women aren't given this option. This has to change and it has to change now!"

Arbenita Misini (17 years old) "Going to the United Nations was a great experience. At the Boy - Girl Dialogue the girls shared many stories of how girls are abused in school, at home, and even on the street. We also spoke about how media impacts violence towards women."

Abeke Teyibo (right) *(Photo by Mary Kay Louchart)*

The following girls are from Academy of St. Catharine's in the Bronx:

Abeke Teyibo (15 years old) "I have learned how to be a leader towards my fellow women. CSW helped me to network with other teens around the world and to help women globally. I knew that I was a young woman, but CSW had made me proud to be a woman. I have learned that it is possible to be equal with men in our society. Women can learn from each other. These women are my family."

Ingrid Williams
(Photo by Mary Kay Louchart)

Ingrid Williams (16 years old)
"My experience at CSW-55 was mind blowing; I felt very motivated by the speakers at the Youth Orientation and by everyone's high energy... If societies encourage girls at a young age to become involved in science and math they would have more successful futures and be able to provide for their families. We must also change the mindset of boys in schools and get them to realize that girls are equal to them. Boys … should raise (girls) up and give them hope for a better future. Instead, they are being just like their fathers and keeping them oppressed. We have to break this vicious cycle or there will not be a promising future for women and girls in the future."

Edilenia Rojas (17 years old) "CSW this year to me, was an amazing experience…I finally found out what I wanted to do with my life. CSW was my pathway to a new beginning in my life where I would help all humans to acknowledge their rights and to speak up for others. I enjoyed listening to many speakers this year but particularly Ms. Leymah Gbowee. (The thing)I remember the most is 'we are the future of this community. Fight for what you believe in and stop being pretty and start being active.'

Edilenia Rojas
(Photo by Mary Kay Louchart)

CSW has been a great experience in my life that has changed my way of thinking and acting. CSW, this year, was the track to a new future for me."

Gina Ribustello (18 years old) "CSW is an experience that shows me there is a long road ahead for the United Nations and NGOs to conquer the difficult problems regarding girls and women. But the most exciting part is there are plenty of survivors and accomplishments already; others are works in progress and others beginning to grow--UN Women being one of them. The women and girls I have met at CSW and have had the honor of listening to their accomplishments and stories have inspired me to fight for what I believe in it and reach my goals. The CSW has made an impact on my life and my beliefs and goals will always have a connection to it."

Gina Ribustello on the left and Lena Cheyne as they introduced Sharon Hrynkow from the US Mission.

In the Grail Link to the United Nations Newsletter, #4, ***Lucy Jones*** wrote about the about the work of Religions For Peace and the CSW parallel events. Religions For Peace has 'Women of Faith' networks in many of the Grail countries including Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa, The Philippines, Papua New Guinea. There is a network for Canada and the USA, another for Europe. Her hope is that we can explore this inter-religious organization where our interests and purposes coincide.

Especially poignant was Lucy's reporting: *"Every minute that passes, a woman or adolescent girl dies in pregnancy and childbirth, while many others suffer from obstetric or traumatic fistulas and are hidden away and forgotten. Communities can be influenced by women of faith to prevent these tragic events."* For a copy of Lucy's article, contact Mary Kay Louchart at grail-ipt@juno.com.

Lucy also shared, "The Grail at the UN is an opportunity for Grail members and friends to connect with each other and work together on the various projects we are involved in at the UN and rippling outward. Living

together for a few days—sharing meals, rooms and travel to meetings—strengthens the sense of the Grail as a community. I'd like to give a flavor of that aspect of our work together."

"After attending sessions where we heard the heavy, disturbing stories of women who were trafficked, prostituted, and violated in so many ways, it was a healthy counterpoint to have rich moments of sharing with other Grail women and girls in the Bronx en route to and from the convent, the Grail House, and the UN.

Lucy Jones
(photo Mary Kay Louchart)

Likewise for me, a big part of the experience was getting to know some Grail women better just by sharing meals, waiting for arrivals, setting up, having coffee together or in late night and early morning conversations. I got to know Mary Kay Delgado and Judy Alves much better than I had before from our relationship on the same committee (which meets by conference calls). I enjoyed also the opportunity to meet Marguerite Coyle, a Grail member from North Carolina, and her friend Connie Gates—two very interesting women. Connie works with a rural health project in India and does training in community health and development in the U.S. And of course, it's always good to connect again with the Grail women I know well (though they stay on the move during the CSW): Mary Gindhart, Mary Kay Louchart, and Sharon Joslyn.

Although this was only my second time at the CSW with the Grail, I'd venture to say that this was the best year ever. I think it continues to build, with the support of more Grail members and the leadership of Mary Kay Louchart and Sharon Joslyn. A wonderful educational and relational opportunity was offered to the girls from Italy, Mexico, Korea, Mozambique and the USA, as well as for the rest of us who participated. It is a most worthy work of the Grail." (Lucy will attend the IGA, representing the Grail Link to the United Nations Network.)

Reflections From My Attendence at CSW 2011
by Leonor Vincete, Mexico

I realized that quality education is a right and a pillar to transform life for individuals and communities and that breaking barriers of ethnic or racial discrimination and stereotypes of migrants and women's capacities is essential.

I learned that studying science, technology, engineering, and math give girls and women the capacity to contribute in many fields of work and action, but they need encouragement and support to overcome sterotypes about women's work .

I understood how much migrants need particular tools to move themselves in a world that deprives rights and opportunities to migrants. It was a challenge to me, being a migrant who came from Oaxaca in Mexico, to reflect for the first time on my own path of life since I left my community many years ago. Listening to the girls' testimonies, I became more aware of how much emotional and other kinds of support are needed by girls that go to other parts of the world, fleeing the violence they were suffering at home and who many times find more violence. Yes, we need new tools, knowledge, and training.

At the Bronx and Cornwall Grail centers, I felt fortunate to live in a spirit of solidarity, sharing prayers, talents, meals, and chores. I enjoyed the night we shared songs from our countries. I experienced nice feelings imagining hands extended in front of me, no matter our class, race, culture, politics, and economic status.

NOW I HAVE NEW DREAMS to do something for my own community in Oaxaca, particularly to dream with the girls to break many local customs that oppress us. I feel strength and the commitment to build networks with more women for a better world. GOD BLESS YOU ALL. *Que Dios las bendiga a todas.* I think that I am living in a new spirit of love.

Sharing Experiences of the CSW 55 as reported by Mozambique Grail Women

Ábida Jamal Muhimua

I am delighted that I had the opportunity to attend the CSW session for the third time. All of them were different, starting from the weather where the first one was cold, second cold, and third cooler. But all this cold weather was warmed up with the great hospitality of the Grail members in NY, especially Mary Kay Louchart and Sharon Joslyn.

This year, the theme for the CSW was: "Access and Participation of Women and Girls in Education, Training, Science and Technology." Relating to the theme, technology gives women a unique way to participate in a virtual sphere from their computers , without the structural barriers to equal participation that women face in the public sphere. Participants at the event described internet technologies as women-friendly, as they give women a voice that they may not have in public. Internet creates a non-discriminatory space in which women can discuss and participate in the activist community. Several NGO's presented research, programmes and initiatives, which focused on women's education and ICT training which were often presented as essential means to enhance women's empowerment, capacity and awareness. In contemporary socio-economic and political contexts, meaningful participation is dependent upon having access to ICT tools. Women's access to media and the representation of women in media were dimensions of the ICT discussion.

Integral to CSW were the side-events, organized by and led by grassroots women's leaders and activists, which took place parallel to the government sponsored events at the U.N. headquarters. But in my view, the parallel events educate other NGOs, not government delegations that need to hear and learn from the NGOs. The high-level consultations are primarily controlled by governments, which may not always consider the views of the grassroots leaders. They are closed sessions. The hundreds of female activists across the world, who held countless workshops and sessions over the two weeks, expressed concerns and critiques of UN Women and CSW for excluding the local leaders, workers and victims during the process of formulation of their agenda and policies.

It was important for me to be at CSW because I believe that one can attain education in different institutional settings, events and organizations. I was exposed to real world issues that I would not be exposed to in a classroom or at home. Even though the workshops were very different, they always came back to the theme of the conference, "access to education in science and technology."

Left to right: Timeika Mucambe, Abida Jamal Muhimua and Isabel Naisse Miranda from Mozambique.

I got inspiration from many amazing speakers from around the world. For example, I was inspired by the words of Michele Bachelet, Under-Secretary General and head of UN Women during her speech at Orientation Day of the CSW 55 conference saying "You (girls) represent the future but also more important the present and the world has a duty to listen. Empowerment coupled with access can change the lives of young girls." We need to show that "woman can do all, but not all at the same time." Leymah Gbowee from Liberia of the movie Pray the Devil Back to Hell challenged us by asking if "Are We Doing Enough for Girls?" and advised us to "fight for what you believe in because there is a way out".

I came back home with a heavy mind luggage to fortify the young group that Grail Mozambique formed after CSW 51 in 2007. Two members of that group attended this year's CSW session with me.

I look forward to preparing and contributing to CSW 56 in 2012. The theme will be "The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication; development and current challenges."

Timeika Mucambe

Participating in CSW was a fantastic and unique experience, first because it was the first time I attended a conference about women and girls (an area which I deeply appreciate), and second because it was an international conference and out of my country. Through CSW I feel that I grew mentally and spiritually as a person and learned to associate with people of different ethnicities, ages and personalities.

In the workshops, I realized that the struggle for women's space is being waged all over the world, that the problems faced by Mozambique are not different from the problems in other countries. I witnessed the space the girls are winning. At CSW 55 girls spoke in first person and set up their own panels, and this was splendid. At CSW I became part of a larger family, I made new friends and a developed a broader view of the global society, and the importance of women's role in it.

Isabel Naisse Miranda

Attending the CSW 55 was an important moment of learning and sharing of experiences. I am part of a group that was formed after CSW 51 when the theme was The Girl Child. That was the first CSW where young girls, were heard and shared, had opportunities to learn and speak up. Today, the group where I belong, brings together young girls and boys to make difference with all the youth of the society, by fighting daily for gender equality and growing in a the spirit to help and respect the humanity and creativity of each member.

The CSW 55 gave me an opportunity to bring back to the group new work methodologies, new challenges and above all, strength, dynamism and determination to put in practice all the dreams and plans that we've prepared.

THE GRAIL'S IDENTITY IS NOT STATIC, IT IS BUILT

Rosaurora Espinosa, International Formation Team, Mexico

Introduction:

Women in the world have joined the International Movement of the Grail in a deep and genuine search for justice. The Grail has become a huge tree that spreads its beautiful branches, flowers, and fruits to nourish the members, to fill new lands with seeds, and to join with other organizations to build the great movement for change and a better world.

We keep our own roots. We change during our lives through new knowledge that comes from our Grail sisters about new realities that we are open to since we appreciate our diversity, which brings changes and richness to our lives.

When we became part of the Grail we have a strong identity coming from our family traditions and the culture that nurtured us. We share our native religious traditions with others; many of us grew up in the tradition of Christianity, others did not. We joined in the search for justice.

Once we commited our lives in the Grail spirit, we learned ways to extend our family and our cultural identity, but it is not easy. Communication in our different languages can be difficult. Sometimes we understand words, but it can take years to understand the deep meanings, feelings, and values behind language. We have to learn how to understand from the heart and from the spirit.

Some reflections about living expressions of culture and identity in the Grail:

We accept the challenge of finding together a new common identity. At some point we realize that we are now part of the Grail, but at the same time we remain part of what we were. It is not a simple process to love and to accept every member that we meet. It does not mean that we live a sense of equality automatically.

Our sense of difference is manifested in many ways: we feel surprise at the other members' customs, physical characteristics, ages, health, strengths, weaknesses, ways of praying, and spiritual connection with the divine, and forms of religious expression. THEREFORE, AN ESSENTIAL PART IN OUR TRAINING IS UNDERSTANDING THE COMPONENTS OF OUR LIVES AND OUR HISTORY in the midst of our diversity.

In the Grail we live a privileged situation, as we can be in real contact with "the other cultures, other women's histories, other languages", that are not ours. Therefore we are confronted by our understanding of "what is right." It is a beginning of acceptance and pride that our diversity is a part of our new identity.

However, interest in deeper understanding of the culture that everyone brings is a later step that includes mutual acceptance and confidence that "the others" carry incredible values. We can learn a lot of hidden ways (to our eyes) to build a better world, and lead us to be better people. We really love music, dances, clothing, folklore from other countries! Our reflection goes beyond folklore.

Accepting that the culture brought to the Grail by our sisters from other countries is as valuable as ours, should help us to recognize that we are women with the same potential. In the process, we move between the desire to "be uniform" with regard to religious or spiritual expression and the wish to understand the spirit alive in other cultures. Sometimes we move between understanding ourselves as equals and thinking that we need to protect some friends, which reflects our different understandings of of equality.

We understand that our world and our countries have been surrounded by problems of hatred, human greed, wars, struggle for control of resources, injustices in countries, companies, and vulnerable sectors of our societies. Our life is in the social struggle reporting and disseminating what happens, especially to women, working to provide some relief to people who are suffering.

A valuable part of the Grail is that we do not have to give up our former selves, because our ethnic, national, and professional identities, and our forms of spiritual and religious expression are still with us and can enrich our Movement. Through our veins, along with our ancestral blood, runs the strength of our resistance. We are a power not over people, but to encourage ourselves and others to transform the world. A part of that, equally valuable, is our willingness to analyze what is happening in our social and natural environment, to study the root causes of problems, and seek solutions together. A strong component of that passion comes from our roots. These parts are sources for naming THE NEW IDENTITY OF THE GRAIL.

FORMATION ACTIVITIES AROUND THE GRAIL GLOBE

BRAZIL

Brazilian Grail experience with formation

In Brazil, formation for women who are beginning their process to become members, and formation for those who have been Grail members for two, five, ten, twenty, thirty years or more has been our priority. The importance of formation lies in the need for new women who believe in the Grail values to become able to assume leadership in the Grail Movement. We have been promoting internal discussions among all members about the specific characteristics of Grail Formation and social action in Brazil, so we can really stand as a Movement that is present in people's struggle and especially, in the struggle of the poor and oppressed women in our country.

As Grail women in different contexts we feel the need to ask the following questions: Does the Grail in Brazil need changes? If so, in which aspects? The debate has been fruitful, due, also, to the involvement of Grail women in social projects and in organizations that work with marginalized populations. In the past few years we have engaged in the following quest:

• **Grail Mission:** *Who are we? For what purpose does the movement exist? Which values do we give to society? What is our identity? For whom do we exist?*

• **Grail Vision:** *What is our Movement's dream? Where are we at now? What do we want to achieve in the long run? Where do we go from this point in time to the next?* Formation demands understanding of the Grail history and structures; critical understanding of the role of religion in social transformation as well as questions related to the Catholic Church, Brazil and world social problems.

• **Grail Principles:** *Which beliefs/rules/norms will guide our behavior? Which are the elements that direct our actions? Which elements identify us as a Grail group; as Grail women?*

• **Areas of Grail work:** Themes selected in our actions: spirituality, women and feminism, social justice.

• **Grail Diagnosis:** *Where are we and how do we function?* In this part we identify our strengths and opportunities, as well as our weaknesses and limits.

• **Grail Objectives:** Clear description of the result or impacts we want to achieve.

• **Grail Initiatives:** *What actions we will develop to achieve our goals?*

The formation process is a time to learn about:

- Grail Origins
- The Foundation of Ladies of Nazareth and of the Grail Movement in the Netherlands
- Grail spirituality
- The Grail Movement now/structures
- Women and Feminism
- Social Movements in Brazil
- Racism and ethnic/racial Movements
- Struggle for land in Brazil
- Ecumenism and interreligious dialogue

We know that the present time does not favor a Women´s Movement rooted in spiritual tradition such as the Grail. Nonetheless, we hope to be able to identify the search and the quest that motivate women to dream and work with us; to join the Grail and continue our history.

Formation Meeting in Italy - September 2010

Iris dos Anjos and Silvaní Valentim attended the Formation meeting in Italy. This important and historical gathering was a source of inspiration and renewal, as well as an opportunity to learn from Grail women responsible for Formation in the different continents, countries, and local realities.

The dream of an International Grail Center in Brazil

During the meeting in Italy it was affirmed that Belo Horizonte could become the Grail International Formation Center (GFIC) in Brazil for formation, exchanges, language training, and spiritual deepening.

In Brazil, during our National Assembly in November 2010, we agreed on something very important, which gave us the condition to see the challenge of having an international center as a blessing. **"The Brazilian Grail is living a historical moment in which our creative and socially engaged ways of being can be shared, in very concrete forms, with the international Grail."**

During our discussions in Brazil, challenging questions were put forth:

- *What does it mean to have a GIFC in Brazil?*
- *How does the Brazilian Grail envision its participation in the GIFC and in its organization?*
- *How should we organize ourselves for the building up of the GIFC and what would be our responsibilities?*
- *Will we have to learn languages?*
- *Will those who are not Grail members be able to attend programs offered by the GIFC?*

The idea of developing an International Formation Center in Belo Horizonte was supported and a working group was established. Silvaní Valentim (reference person), Cida Bessa, Luciene Rodrigues, Marina Kryvanick, and Mary Francisca Guimarães received the task to gather and organize the points discussed during the Brazilian National Assembly, as well as to deepen those key points, and to think further about the practical and strategic elements involved in the task of having an International Formation Center in Brazil.

To organize the GIFC, it had been pointed out in Italy, we want to ensure that the network, "Women of the Americas" (Brazil, Canada, Mexico, USA) becomes the "back bone" of the IFC. We are also counting on the support and expertise of Grail women in Italy, Mozambique, Portugal, and South Africa. A letter was written to Grail women in the countries listed above. Those women provided us with feedback. We are in the process of reading and translating the feedback. After this, the Brazilian Work Group, the National Leadership Team, and all Brazilian Grail members must discuss the possibilities and challenges of the proposal and think together about how we should proceed, based on the strength and limits we have, and in dialogue with the international Grail.

Silvaní Valentim, Brazilian Grail

ITALY

Plans are in the making to have some formation meetings for two young women who are interested in the Grail. One is Samantha, who worked 'back stage' at the formation program in Pirapora. 'Back stage' is one of the very important ways we have these days of offering a living and working experience of 'formation' in the Grail.

They also shared that they can serve as a resource team for feminist theology—whether suggesting a bibliography on theologies, or maybe even being able to be part of a program somewhere! They informed us of a good publication on feminist theology by Elisabet Green, and they always refer to the monthly review, *CONCILIUM,* which is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, etc.

MOZAMBIQUE

They will have a special program during the weekend immediately following the IGA to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Grail in Mozambique. Although short, it will be an event that will incorporate many elements of "formation": on the one hand, issues related to social justice, democracy, peace, and reconciliation processes and, on the other, related to culture in general and cultural diversity.

SOME OF THE THINGS THEY ARE WORKING ON:

This year they are making a strong effort to organize and compile different materials they have created or used, for example:

1) A booklet with the subjects discussed at "Conversas de Sexta" ("Friday Conversations") during the last 15 years. Most of these subjects are related to democracy, justice, women, economics, corruption, peace, reconciliation processes, art issues, etc. They would like to share it in case other groups would like to use it.

2) A booklet about "celebrations" (a kind of "Let us Celebrate") they have used especially when celebrating their anniversaries (birthdays).

3) A booklet with the programmes used in "Tertúlias de Sábado" during the last 15 years. This particularly relates to "cultural issues";

4) A booklet with songs

They are thinking to have them ready by August/ September. Whatever they have ready by the IGA in September, we look forward to them sharing.

Celebration of the Grail Day

In Mozambique we celebrated the Grail Day on a beautiful Sunday, 14 November 2010. The theme of the celebration was "Know The Grail" and "Celebrate the Sanctity." The items of the agenda were: Introduction of the participants; What is The Grail and the History of the Grail Mozambique; Sharing about "My Growth within The Grail"; Reflection on the Sanctity; and finally lunch and business.

The gathering was marked by the presence of the youth group of the Grail Mozambique ages 18 to 23 years old and guests invited by the senior group of the Grail Mozambique.

The session focused essentially on the principles of the Grail, on women and their important work with regards to justice, peace, environment, and the whole of creation.

We started the celebration with a prayer in which, besides the biblical readings of the day, each one shared her reason to give thanks to the Lord.

We did introductions in pairs and then introduced each other to the group at large. It was a special moment of presentation characterized by a lot of curiosity, suspense, and it was fun and joyful. At the end we already knew the names and a bit of each one's lives.

Then the seniors talked alternatively about the origins of the Grail, its history, international structure, countries in which it is represented, and talked in a particular and in detail of the history of the Grail Mozambique, its members and activities carried out internally.

Guided by Ida Alvarinho, we read the story of the eagle and the hen. To those who do not know it, its main characters are a big bird that lived in a hen-house and a naturalist. The essence of the story is that there was a naturalist who saw the bird living in the hen-house. He insistently called to the bird saying "this is not your habitat or modus vivendus, because you are an eagle and will always have a heart of one, and the time had come for you to fly. He kept on insisting. One day he took the bird to a very high mountain and repeatedly said to it "you are not a hen, but an eagle and will always have a eagle's heart." Then the bird looked downhill and, recognizing its companions, opened its long wings and flew, disappearing in the open sky.

When we finished reading the story we broke into small groups discussed what was the key point of the story and if, at some stage of our lives, we identified ourselves with the characters, mainly the eagle, that one day decided to fly very high.

Many of us started to express that we identified with the eagle and we shared our stories and experiences. Thus, the message retained was that even if a naturalist does not come in our way to open our eyes, nor a favorable place or environment, we have the power to change ourselves, to find out better qualities, and hence live a better life.

After a break, we started the second part of the celebration: "Celebrating the "Sanctity."

We started with a reading that evoked sanctity and, in silence, each one of us meditated on it and afterwards we had to write in a small piece of paper the name and the qualities of someone in our lives that we consider "a Saint".

We shared what we had read and then wrote on the piece of paper and at the end we prayed deeply for our Saints. It was a very profound moment in which we evoked and adored these people that are saints to us.

We ended the meeting with a thanksgiving song and dance. At the end we had a lunch that started in a particular way, eating something unusual to describe that there has been and there are peoples in the world that are suffering, but with sacrifice we can strive for a better world of justice and peace…

And that was one more day celebrating The Grail.

Mozambique Annual Meeting, 27th – 30th January 2011

At the meeting, we evaluated the past year and planned the activities for the rest of the year. The first day was dedicated to an introduction and logistics for the rest of the days. For the following three days, we had several activities including discussion on different topics that were organized and facilitated by some of the Grail members and invited guests.

Themes were the symbolism of the Grail, domestic violence, women's health, macroeconomics (using Alison Healey's document related to Trans-Pacific Agreement), entrepreneurship, spirituality (culture and religion), and a brief analysis of the the current country situation (social, economic, and political issues). We reflected on and debated with a lot of enthusiasm and have inspired all of us during those four days.

Mozambique Grail Women Performing a Ritual

Undoubtedly, the epic moment was the launching of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Grail in Mozambique. The International Grail Movement arrived in Mozambique in 1986. It was constituted as an NGO in 1994 and recognized by International Grail in 1995 during the IGA in Sydney, Australia. During those 25 years of experience and dynamism, a lot can be said and shared, but, for sure, our commitment is bonded with actions to promote justice and peace within society — in particular — for women, and to contribute to the creation of new models of living, mutual understanding, and solidarity among women of different cultures.

PARAGUAY…Seeds Have Been Planted

Interest in the Grail began in Paraguay with contacts between Cristina dos Anjos and Modesta Arevalos, through works developed by Caritas in Paraguay. At that time Modesta worked for Caritas. She calls Cristina her godmother in the Grail, since it was Cristina who introduced her to the Grail. Modesta participated in the Young Women of the Americas meeting in Honduras in 2007 and continues to be part of Women of the Americas Network communications.

October 09 to 10, 2010, we, Íris dos Anjos and Nádia Villefort, went to Paraguay to start the first steps of a Grail group in that country. We arrived in Asunción and went to Modesta's house in San Lorenzo, the third most important city in the country. San Lorenzo, which has a university, was chosen by the group to be a strategic place for the Grail in Paraguay.

The meeting was held at Casa de Espiritualidade Maria Auxiliadora, a space of religious and spiritual formation with a strong tradition in youth formation. Saturday morning was a time to get to know each other. The group consisted of six women (Modesta, Cristina, Rosana Ramos, Ana Maria, Graciela, and Pabla) who are between 30 and 50 years old. They are involved in social projects in the areas of popular education, social pastoral work, psicopedagogy and health. The women are married, single, widowed, or separated; all have a deep desire to change the reality of oppression and social exclusion lived by the majority of women in Paraguay.

At the first meeting we shared about the Grail international structures, the Grail Vision, and the Grail women in Brazil. We used the text of the Faith Message, the origins of the Grail, and moments of celebration in the beginning and at the end of the day. On the second day, Modesta presented Paraguay's socio-political reality, showing the situation of oppression lived by the majority of the population and also the desire of the group to start a Grail path in that country, bringing responses to those social and political challenges.

We felt from the beginning that the women already understand the Grail within themselves. They shared with emotion their spiritual search, marked as our

own, by the contradictions women face in the Church, an institution led by men. We felt that there is a deep friendship between them. And, since we talked about the Nucleus of the Grail, they said they are the nucleus of the Grail in Paraguay.

by Íris José dos Anjos/Nadia Villefort

PHILIPPINES

1. Their next formation program will most likely be in April or May 2012.
2. The Leadership Training Program for Young Women/Paglaum 5 would also be in April or May 2012, since these are the months of their break in school.
3. Following is an excerpt from an article that appeared in the German Grail newsletter: *Antenne*.

35th Anniversary of Grail in the Philippines: "To be in the Grail . . . is to be more"

On 3-9 November 2010, the Grail in the Philippines celebrated our 35th anniversary. We were recognized as a national group in 1975 by Simone Tagher from Egypt, who was then the International President.

We were honored and blessed with the visit of Christa Werner from Germany representing the ILT and Joke van Neerven from Utrecht, the Netherlands. Surprise guests from Papua New Guinea were Rose Maule and Albina Namuesh. We had *Paglaum* (literally "hope" — an outreach program for young women) participants with us as well, from Eastern Visayas and Western Mindanao. All twenty of us had a session on our lifeline to get to know each other.

In addition to Scripture reflections and celebration of the Eucharist, there was a program with preschool children singing, dancing, and reciting poems, as well as Grail members expressing the indigenous cultures of Northern and Western Mindanao in dance. The morning of November 7 was devoted to a session on the Txintza process, a rare opportunity to have the three island groups meet together from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

The Grail legend was staged in a Pantomime by both Grail members and the Paglaum group. Two questions keep us true to the Grail vision and mission: to ask the world, what is its sorrow? Who are we serving while serving through the Grail? At a certain moment of the evening, Joke was able to say very well what is our essence as a Grail movement: "To be in the Grail ...is to be more."

Monica de Leon, IC member, wrote: "The Grail in the Philippines is still young and full hope. It is still strong and ready to take on the challenges in the next five years including livelihood for our needy Grail members, regular communication of team members of Manila, Eastern Samar and Northern and Western Mindanao, and expansion of Grail membership."

Jeng (Jennette) Rodriguez, Communications Person wrote: "I was able to participate in the celebration and was lucky to personally meet Christa and Joke and meet new friends. We were inspired and blessed with what Christa and Joke shared with the group. I was really amazed that with their age, they are very healthy and strong enough to continue to live the vision and mission of the Grail wherever they go. We hope we can do as much accomplishments as they had. Some insights I got from the meeting were:

— We need to know who we serve.

— We need to ask what the people need and this is what we need to respond to.

— Look at the signs of the times, and act on it.

— Like the Grail cup, we have to be empty to be open to the lessons in life."

We want to pray always: *Lord, let me grow to that for which you have destined me.*"

Grail Network/Work Group Reports

EARTH, ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY NETWORK

This really is the Earth's time and century with many signs of hope of Resurrection. Climate change is the most serious problem facing humanity and threatening the future of all creation. As people of faith we are called on to familiarise ourselves with this issue so that we can engage intelligently in the actions that are being undertaken to reduce our own carbon footprints and those of the nations where we live, especially the biggest polluters in Europe, North America, Brazil, India, China, Russia, and South Africa.

One of the big steps this year is the UN FCCC COP 17. We are very excited that the Climate Change COP 17 is to be held in Durban from 26 November to 9 December 2011. One of the main tasks will be to renegotiate or replace the Kyoto Protocol. We are planning to send many girls from the Women's Leadership and Training Programme (WLTP) and to have an international delegation from the Grail Earth Network. We have booked a big conference centre for 66 people and are involved on many fronts to make the conference a huge success. A caravan of buses

will travel from Nairobi over a period of 2 weeks, bringing youth through Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, stopping along the way to educate people, as it heads for Durban. The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission in Southern Africa is planning something similar within South Africa, Swaziland, and Botswana. It would be wonderful if some young Grail members in East Africa could become part of the caravan. The contact person is: isaiah@nca.no from Norwegian Church Aid based in Nairobi.

We plan to have a 3-day meeting of the Grail Earth Network at the time of the high level deliberations when all delegates besides heads of government are excluded from the COP proceedings. We are working hard to raise funds to bring 25 Grail delegates from around the world. So far we have heard positively from Pearl Drego in India, from Mozambicans, from Mexicans, and from Jeanette Loanzon in the Philippines.

PLEASE CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO ATTEND.

Sibongile Mtungwa, sibongile@webafrica.org.za
Marilyn Aitken, maitken@mail.ngo.za ,
Earth Network Coordinators

HUMAN TRAFFICKING NETWORK

Dutch Foundation of Religious against Trafficking in Women 1991 – 2011 (Stichting Religieuzen tegen Vrouwenhandel - SRTV)

In 1991 Sister Michel Keesen heard a voice reverberate in her head. It said, *"Voice that calls me,"*

- *Who are you?*
- *Sister, where is your sister?*
- *What has happened to her?*
- *Can she grow up to be what she is meant to be?*
- *Are you not your sister's keeper?*

In that year, as a result of this calling to actively show solidarity with oppressed women, the initiative was taken to form a national network of the religious against trafficking in women (SRTV) and the corresponding forced prostitution. It was also the foundation's intention to contribute to the creation of a respectable future for the victims of this trade.

In 1998, I was in contact with a victim of trafficking from the Philippines, my first reaction was that we in the Grail have to do something. At the time Geraldine Huising was the first Grail member to join as a volunteer for SRTV. After her death in 1997, I took her place. Also currently involved are Phily van Dijck (board member) and Elly König. Mieke Borgdorff has made special works of art for the publication of a DVD entitled "*Elena, A Reflection on Human Trafficking*."

Since 1988 the importance of action against trafficking of women has been on the agenda during all international Grail meetings. At the moment the Grail is active in 18 countries from which victims of trafficking are sent, are in transit, or are taken to.

In 2006 the Grail started an international network, "Human Trafficking." In various Grail countries contact persons are giving attention to the problem. Twice a year the SRTV sends out a magazine "Transactions" to 41 Grail members all over the world free of charge.

This year the SRTV Foundation theme is "human/women trafficking and exploitation," and a special project, "Sisters for Sisters – Indonesia," for which it is seeking financial support. Sandra Reemer led a festive gathering on International Women's Day March 3, 2010. Mrs. Corinne Dettmeijer, National Reporter Human Trafficking, spoke about the sometimes inhumane situations in the Netherlands. Mrs. Joan Ferrier, director of E-quality, explained the work of SRTV. Mrs. Lerina Kwamba told about "Kariboe Bibi", a meeting place for African women in The Hague, and a performance of *"Sari, an Indonesian girl in Malaysia"* was presented.

The celebration of 20th anniversary of SRTV was May 12th in Hertogenbosch and on December 9th there will be a contact day for all those who have been involved in the work of the SRTV.

Although the Foundation has been active for two decades and the media gave much publicity to the theme, women/human trafficking is still expanding. We hope that the SRTV can continue contributing to the growing national and international awakening regarding this problem.

by Ton Brouwer, Coordinator

Country Reports

GERMANY

Advent Celebration in the Grail Centre in Mülheim, Germany

In spite of freezing cold weather and a lot of snow, 19 women arrived at the Grail centre in Mülheim to be part of the Advent celebration. The invitation was sent out to women living in our region that have had

contact with members of our small Grail group. They were invited for a friendly gathering, some time of reflection and a warm snack. (Friday, Dec. 3, 3:30PM – 7:00PM).

The welcome with hot coffee, tea, and German cakes facilitated the communication with each other. Small tables were arranged in a circle and each woman introduced herself telling about her connection with the Grail, her work, her life…whatever she wanted to share. Their ages were between 45 and 84 years.

The reflection time was introduced by Silvana Ferraguti. Small program folders with a colourful picture of Santa Lucia were distributed. The image of Santa Lucia was a surprise for many guests.

Lucia's story was presented in three parts:

Historical witness about her life in Syracuse (286 - 310 BC) underlies her strong faith and her caring for poor and sick people and those Christian refugees in the catacombs. She became a martyr.

Mythological aspects go back to a mother goddess called "Luz." She represented Light and Dark, Life and Death, and was called upon by pregnant women.

The rituals on her feast support the meaning of the celebration. The date corresponded to the Winter Solstice Julian Calendar. The hope for more light, warmth, and life is the central motivation. The symbol is a crown with candles. It is said that Santa Lucia found her way in the catacombs with light on her head. She needed her hands to distribute food. The feast of Santa Lucia is a traditional Advent custom in Sweden. Lucia with her crown surrounded by girls in white gowns brings light and special Lucia cakes.

On the table in the centre of our group was the crown with long candles surrounded by small lamps for each of the participants. After music, the telling Lucia's life story, the reading of John 1:5 and 8:12, and singing the candles were lit. We danced while singing: "Mache dich auf und werde Licht, denn dein Licht kommt." (Set out and become light for your Light comes.)

We finished our ceremony with a prayer and a blessing and a final Hallelujah song. The whole group enjoyed this mutual experience and many women expressed their wish to be invited again. Most women stayed for the hot Italian soup.

Gerda Kaufmann

GHANA

Kpando Hospital celebrates 50th Anniversary

The celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Kpando Hospital, which Dr. Margret Marquart of the Grail in Germany started and built up until 1977, was the reason I accepted my friend Augusta Sena Gabianu's invitation to Ghana in 2011!
Augusta, who was born in Kpando, was very concerned that the beginnings of Kpando Hospital and the service and commitment of the Grail women would be recognized. Not only Margret, who was the first medical doctor in Kpando, but also more than 50 women from 10 countries, members of the Grail or friends, gave service to the people there, mainly in the medical, but also in the social and pastoral field. How deeply the people were touched by the Grail and particularly by Margret, shows that they started to call the hospital "Margretkorji", and later named it officially "Margret Marquart Catholic Hospital" (MMCH).

I travelled with Margret's niece, who is a medical doctor, for two weeks to Ghana. We stayed as special guests in Augusta's lovely and hospitable Lalibela Cottage in Accra. She had prepared an itinerary for us to get to know as much as possible of Ghana today.

Ghana was the first African country to become independent (1957) and now is a rather stable democracy. In the last two elections a government change took place between the leading party and the opposition. This was possible because the civil society formed a coalition, in which Augusta had been involved for training election helpers. The traditional system of local authorities — chiefs and queen mothers — is still functioning and assuming responsibility for local matters. In Kpando we paid a visit to the Paramount Chief of the district and conversed with him.

In Kumasi, the centre of the Ashanti kingdom and culture, we met the former Archbishop Sarpong, who is a chief and still a member of the council of chiefs. Enculturation of the Christian Faith into Ghanaian culture has been his concern. When the Cathedral was restored each window was decorated with an Adrinka sign, that symbolized a Ghanaian as well as a Christian value. In the Old Palace of the Ashanti king, the guards of the present king returned the rifles they had carried during an official function of the king just that day! The Ghanaians cherish their culture and their history, even its dark sides. We visited Fort Elmina , near Cape Coast which was built by the Portuguese in the 15th century and became under the Dutch

Governors in the 17th and 18th century a frightening place of trading slaves to the "New World".

In Accra we met several of Augusta's friends and family and came to know projects she is involved in, such as an art centre and a house for street children. Fifty to sixty of these children come each year for a Christmas party to her house.

The climax of our journey was the Jubilee celebration of the MMCH in Kpando. More than a thousand people gathered. The local traditional, political, and church authorities attended the feast and the Minister of Health came from Accra. The program started with the blessing of a bust of Margret Marquart and of a spring fountain crowned by a statue of the Sacred Heart. A new gynaecological operation theatre, donated by the German Embassy, was solemnly opened. There was a Jubilee Choir, many lively dances and many speeches. The medical doctor in charge — and at the moment the only Ghanaian doctor and the first Ghanaian gynaecologist — Sr. Dr. Lucy Hometowu spoke very clearly about the achievements and challenges the hospital faces. She is a member of a congregation, founded by Bishop Lodonu, Bishop of Ho, to which Kpando belongs. She is a strong and very competent women and respected and loved by the people. She has a "doctors' brigade", three Cuban doctors and one Laboratory Technician, who work with her. The Minister of Health promised to send another Ghanaian doctor and a second ambulance. The first girl baby born on Christmas 2010 was baptized Margret in addition to her Ewe-names.

At the end of the Jubilee celebrations all the local chiefs, the Paramount chief and the Queen Mothers — who have a very special role — came on Sunday to the Eucharist celebration in the Hospital Chapel, again with the beautiful singing of the Jubilee Choir. The hospital chaplain invited the local and the Paramount Chief to speak to the congregation. They expressed their gratefulness for the service rendered to the people since the very beginning and their hopes for the future, especially that the nurses training, the Grail had provided during the time of its being in charge of the hospital would be resumed again. As a representive of the International Grail I gave the greetings and best wishes of the Grail. I expressed joy, that the hospital had become so beautiful and strong and has become the hospital of the people and with Sr. Dr. Lucy Hometowu in charge, who is a native from that area, is a living example of what women can become and do.

Marita Estor

In Loving Memory

Margaret McCristal (Australia)
1921 – 2010

Both Margaret's parents died when she was in her early twenties. Her brother John, a Franciscan priest, suggested that Margaret might live for a time at The Grail Centre, 'Tay Creggan,' in Hawthorn, Melbourne, Australia. It was not long before she decided to dedicate her life in The Grail. After some time of preparation for this in the Grail house in Springwood, Margaret returned to 'Tay Creggan', where she was part of a very creative team, guiding groups of young women each year through residential programs, in which the religious, cultural and social dimensions of Christian life were integrated in a way of life in community. In 1969, she moved to the new Grail Center —'Hesed' in Adeney Avenue, Kew.

In the 1960s and 70s, Margaret managed the Catholic Library Bookshop in Melbourne. The bookshop flourished as she and her staff served with creative energy the emerging church of the time. She became a specialist in children's literature. The Grail in Melbourne benefitted hugely from her knowledge of the best contemporary writers in a wide range of fields.

Of all Margaret's gifts, I think the most outstanding have been her creativity and loving care. Of course, loving care in itself is creative, but, Margaret was also a maker of beautiful things. She was a fine weaver. Margaret's most immediate neighbors in the later years of her life were new arrivals in Australia, with different cultures, different faiths. They esteemed her, because of her warm welcome when they arrived and her unfailing interest in their welfare.

During the week when Margaret was dying, I attended an ecumenical group reflection on the theme, 'What does being a follower of Jesus mean?' We must seek just and loving relations with God, our other fellow human beings, and all creation. There can be no better life in God's eyes than a life of such relationships. Little wonder that my thoughts were constantly of Margaret as we talked. We honor the fine and generous part she has played in the transforming of her world. As we grieve her going from us, we are happy in our memories of the years she was with us

Alison Healey

Irmgard Gräsel (Germany)
1921-2011

The German Grail sent news of the passing of Irmgard Gräsel, who died May 17th at the age of 90. She served twelve years in Uganda. After her retirement she often travelled to other Grail countries and offered her skills, creating bonds with the Grail women in these places. Irmgard`s involvement within the Grail community, national and international, will remain alive in the memories of many. Who was not infected by her positive, joyful way of life, the stories, games, enthusiastic reports and the deep, active services for Grail women and anyone in need where ever she happened to be? Even the handicaps of old age she accepted with a jolly smile and her shining humour stayed alive till the last days. On Saturday, May 28, 2011 she was buried in the main cemetery of Bochum, Germany where sacred African songs and dances were performed during the ceremony, as an expression of her deep love of the people of Africa.

The community of Grail women in Germany

Rita (Margarita) Kurda (Germany)
1921-2011

Rita was the woman with the longest history in the Grail in Germany. At the age of 12, she acted in Berlin as "Kreuzkind" (child of the cross) and was an angel in the "Jedermann" play of the Grail 1934. After World War II and the new beginning of the Grail, Rita joined in many programmes, organized by Alberta Lücker in Bonn.

During that period her concern was the reconciliation of the World Religions, and later all the themes of Vatican II. In the seventies, she intensified the contact with the group in Mülheim and participated in regional meetings.

In the nineties she was confined to a wheelchair and a progressive eye disease made her dependent. She remained open and interested. The secret of her optimism she revealed on her 80th birthday saying: "The most important thing is to have trust in God and to accept help"! A resurrection service for her will unite us in prayer and thanksgiving on July 9th 2011 in Duisburg, Carmel Church.

Gerda Kaufmann, Erika Haugg and Silvana Ferraguti

Maria dos Anjos Saraovoa (Portugal)
1942-2011

Maria dos Anjos was part of our Portuguese belonging group for a few years. First in the wider Oporto group, then in the small Foz group. It was very challenging for me to listen to her, in her irony, but chiefly in her intellectual capacity. Lately, because of her disease, she distanced herself. We had to travel far to her funeral in Serra da Estrela, but we all went. In the small granite chapel, under the thunder and the pouring skies, we were together, really together, saying goodbye.

To Maria

I crossed the path of sorrow and my tears became rivers of hope. I opened my arms and found the love that filled my heart.

I gave it to all that came up to me, to the suffering, to the lonely.

I looked up and found God, hidden in the small things of the daily life.

That Sun transfigured my heart, shone in my smile and flooded me with peace.

I shall be in the sources of living water, in the hearts and in the memories. I shall be with you forever.

The Portuguese Grail group of Maria dos Anjos

Announcements

■ Book by Grail author

Pearl Drego, a Grail member in India, has worked many years in New Delhi and has travelled widely to several countries sharing her scholarship and leading workshops in psychotherapy, spirituality, family counseling, and gender equity. She has a new book *The Charism of Karuna,* published by Alfreruby Publishers, Bandra (396 pgs.), which is a fascinating contextual biography of the life and mission of Sr. Karuna (Mary) Braganza, of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart who was Principal of Sophia College at a crucial time in India's history. Pearl was a student and staff member at Sophia College and has known Sr. Karuna closely.

Pearl writes about Sr. Karuna's magnificent contribution as an educator, both at national and international levels, and her amazing efforts in Torpa for the uplifting of tribal peoples and the marginalized. Pearl shows Sr. Karuna at work destroying conservative structures and setting free the cartwheels of change, always led by her own inner courage. Pearl can describe these characteristics of Sister Karuna, because Pearl has many of them herself.

The book can be ordered from radhakapuria@gmail.com.

■ LIEN Network European Meeting

The Lien Network will hold a European Meeting from 5 to 9 September 2011 at the Grail's Center in Golega, Portugal. The theme is: *The Four Elements: Identity, Mobility, Development and Sustainability in Europe.* Contact: redelien@groups.live.com. Register by 15th of August 2011.