C R O S S R O A D S

A Newsletter of the Grail International Leadership Team

August 2016

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Letter from the ILT

Dear Grail sisters all over the world,

Six months ago we gave an update of our activities in 2015, particularly the latter half of the year. We also expressed a wish that you be filled with happiness and all good things. However, we all know that it is not always according to our wishes.

Some of what did not go according to our wishes include these: National elections in Uganda, followed by break-ins to their Centre in Kampala and elsewhere in the country. The elections in the Philippines. The violence and unrest in the lead-up to South Africa's local government elections in August. The bombing in Brussels. The struggle in the USA as the Grail community there tries to reach consensus on the sale of a portion of Grailville. The list goes on.

As we experience the unpleasantness, many of us are tempted to want to give up on 'our world'; but we are soon reminded in John 3:17 "for God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, instead through him the world is to be saved."

We gaze into the Grail Cup and draw inspiration and remember our Grail vision as captured by Baba Amte:

"I sought my God, my God I could not see.
I sought my soul, my soul eluded me.
I sought my neighbor and I found all three."

At our face-to-face meeting in April 2016 in Cornwall, we took stock of what we had achieved since the International Council meeting in September 2015 and considered the plans for the next 18 months. The highlights were sent in a letter to the International Council members on the 4th of May. Subsequent information was sent out in letters to countries and in the monthly Newsletter. For those who may have missed that information, the plans are as follows:

May 1 to December 31, 2016
Nucleus and Blessing the Space follow-up meeting in Germany: 12-22 May
International Election Team appointed: May
European meeting in Brussels: 4-5 June
Sobrado retreat in Spain: 27 June - 3 July
International exchange in Netherlands, Germany, Belgium: 5-19 July
Formators programme in South Africa: 23-31 July
Women, Theology and Mystics in Portugal: 25-29 July
Formators programme in Portugal: 8–16 October
ILT face-to-face meeting in Portugal: 5-15 November
Habitat 111 UN in Quito, Ecuador: October
UFER Board in Quito, Ecuador

January to July 2017
International Grail election process (nominations) January
Social Change Methodologies Brazil: 14 – 29 January
Formators programme in Honduras: 17–26 February
CSW in New York: March
ILT face-to-face meeting/IGA preparation: May

July to December 2017
Sacred Activism: July
IGA in Fatima, Portugal - Arrivals 10-11, Orientation 12, Assembly 13-25 July
('Big meeting' to be finalized at the IGA)
IGA follow-up programme in Golega, Portugal: July
Announcement of new ILT members: 1 November

January 2018
ILT Hand over meeting, probably in Utrecht

Meanwhile, the ILT continues to meet monthly on Skype; and we welcome suggestions and proposals for improvements to our communication and planning.

Marian, Zodwa and Maria Carlos

Introduction to this Crossroads, *Carol Siemering, USA*

The theme of this issue is how different countries see the image of the cup, the Grail, as an inspiration in their work and visioning today. What is its meaning and relevance? There are a number of sharings from the Retreat in Sobrado, impressions from a stay in Kisekibaha, the Reflection Week on the Nucleus, and a visit to Angola as well as In Loving Memory of Dada Rosalia Ann Ogwel, of the Kenyan Grail.

Reflections on the Grail Cup, *Anne Hope, South Africa*

The Grail Cup.
The Search for ever-deeper Communion with one another, with the Earth Community, and with God
Written for discussion on the Eucharist for the Txintxa process 2013

We have come from many lands,
many occupations, many cultures,
drawn by the legend of the Grail,
our mysterious symbol of Blessing,
of generosity, of sharing, of peace,
fulfilment and understanding, of 'shalom'.

The search of the Grail is a search of longing,
and longing to belong.
I think all of us are in the Grail
because we long for a different world,
a world of peace and plenty, of justice and love,
a world of caring, friendship and conviviality,
where people live happily together,
sharing generously the abundance of God's gifts
and where the fundamental human needs
of every woman, every man and every child
can be met.

We are aware of our own woundedness
and our limitations.
This only increases our eagerness in the search
for the fullness of life in abundance,
for ourselves and for all others,
a fullness which includes
the enjoyment of goodness, truth and beauty.
We only glimpse, in graced moments
Of attunement, to one another and
to the world around us,
the mysterious, elusive Presence,
within and way beyond us,
which many of us call God.
We long for intimacy with one another,
and intimacy with God.

The Irish poet and philosopher, John Donohue,
writes of the 'longing to belong' like this:

"The human heart is inhabited
by many different longings.
In its own voice each one calls to your life.
At different times in your life they whisper to you
in unexpected ways.

"Beneath all these is a longing that has
somehow always been there
and will continue to accompany
every future moment of your life.
It is a longing that you will never be able
clearly to decipher
though it will never cease to call you.

"The voice comes from your soul.
It is the voice of the eternal longing within you,
and it confirms you as a restless pilgrim
on the Earth.

There is something within you
that no-one or nothing else in the world
Is able to satisfy…..
When you befriend this longing
it will keep you awake and alert,
as to why it is that you are here on Earth…..

"If you listen to the voices of your longing,
they will constantly call you to different
forms of belonging.
Why do we need to belong?

"The shelter of \belonging empowers you.
It confirms in you a stillness and
sureness of heart.
You are able to endure external pressure
and confusion
you are sure of the ground
on which you stand…..

"Once the soul awakens
the search begins and you can never go back.
From then on you are enflamed with a special
longing
which will never again let you linger
in the lowlands of complacency and partial
fulfilment.
When this spiritual path opens
you can bring an incredible generosity
to the world
and to the lives of others……"

For us the Grail Cup is the "pearl of great price,
the treasure hidden in a field."
It is the cup of Blessing.
Intuitively we know that if we could find it,
it would satisfy the hunger and thirst,
not only of each yearning human heart,
but of the whole human family longing to
belong,
challenging us to share all our riches.
We live in a world hungry for bread and love,
for food, clothing and shelter,
for security, intimacy, freedom, justice and peace.
We try to respond with love.
Love often involves suffering,
and suffering can often only be healed
and made whole, holy, by sacrifice.
(sacre facio to make holy)
So often we are aware that our love is only
a feeble flame,
bringing little light or warmth,
easily extinguished as it encounters difficulties.
As we grow in awareness of the pain
of our neighbours,
the pain of the people of the world,
we try to respond.

Our efforts arise from mixed motives,
seldom as single hearted as we hoped
that they would be.
We face our failures and feel the need to repent,
to make amends, we ask for mercy…..
The flawed efforts of much of our work
are only fragile fragments of love,
small crumbs of bread.
The intensity of our joys and sorrows
are like drops of wine.
small and insignificant
in the wider scheme of things,
and yet, we have been blessed with so much.

There are a million things for which
we must give thanks,
for food and friends and family,
for fun and laughter,
for goodness, truth and beauty,
and for the 'great,
gay inimitably happening Earth'
(e.e.cummings)
and, particularly, for the privilege of life itself.

We need to express our gratitude.
Thanksgiving naturally arises in our hearts,
except in times of dire distress.

So we place the bread crumbs of our work
and the wine drops of our experiences into the Cup
and raise them on the altar of life.
An extraordinary transformation takes place.
These crumbs of our lives,
these drops of our feelings of joy and of fear
are made holy, sacrificed,
made life-giving, powerful and effective,
as they are incorporated into the sacrifice of Christ.

In a way we would hardly have dared to hope
they help to ensure that the hungry share the bread of the world,
the poor forgive the greed of the rich,
the isolated find a place in loving community,
and the alienated feel welcome again in a warm home.

We are all in need of nourishment,
food for the body and food for the soul.
As we share the transformed bread and wine
we rejoice in the unity
that already exists among us,
and are given strength and love
to make that unity, deeper, wider, more perfect.

Many Christians have experienced all this deeply
in the celebration of the mass
and in their communion services,
this experience of 'communio'
a 'oneness with' God, and with one another,
a oneness that goes far deeper
than the sum of all the separate parts.
This has been especially strong for many
in the small informal community celebrations of Eucharist
in the Grail gatherings
Many Grail groups have come to rely
on this spiritual nourishment
and this source of inspiration and bonding.
We all long for the time
when the celebration of the Eucharist will be 'inclusive'
open to all believing Christians.,
helping us all to live in harmony of mind and heart.

However we know that many Grail members,
who are not Catholic, have felt painfully excluded, and the celebration of the Eucharist has caused division not unity in groups
where some of the members
are on a different faith journey..

Reflexiones en torno al significado de La Copa del Grial, Mujeres del Grial Morelos-Valle de Mexico A.C

Para nosotras como grupo de trabajo que viene desarrollando actividades en favor de las mujeres de las regiones de Morelos y Valle de México, y Oaxaca, hemos comprendido que nuestro compromiso con Ellas en muy grande y **La Copa del Grial** nos da la fuerza para continuar nuestra labor sabiendo, que también es un desafío en nuestras vidas.

Nos lleva a la entrega como **Jesús** entrega en la Cena su cuerpo y su sangre en una entrega plena por nosotros, hasta la muerte sin reservas, y con la copa nos hace esa invitación para aplicarlo en los grupos de mujeres y fuera de los grupos. Es un **darme** hasta que duela.

Cuando hice mi compromiso con El Grial sentí que era un **contrato con lo sagrado.**

Y así para otra compañera le significa la Eucaristía de cada domingo, de la búsqueda del Santo Grial, de los Loores y Heroínas del pueblo de Dios, de la última Cena Pascual, de la sangre de Cristo, de las comidas de convivencias donde se comparte la amistad, de mi vida de dar y recibir.

La inspiración de Copa es tener mucho amor por las personas, especialmente por las mujeres verlas con misericordia, ser solidarias con Ellas, así vamos caminando con responsabilidad y compromiso por las más vulnerables.

Vemos que para todas es un signo de entrega, de servicio, de amor sin interés, inspirándonos, Paz, Unión, signo Universal de trabajo, abundancia y felicidad, es una invitación a la **unión de todas las razas y sus costumbres.**

Reflections on the meaning of the Grail Cup, *Grail women of Morelos Grail-Valle de Mexico A. C.*

Translated by Mary Kay Louchart and Sharon Joslyn, USA

As a Grail working group, developing activities for women in the regions of Morelos, Valley of Mexico and Oaxaca, we understand that we have a big commitment to those women. The Grail Cup gives us the strength to continue our work knowing that it is also a challenge in our own lives.

It leads us to give of ourselves as Jesus gave of himself at the last supper by offering his body and blood for us to his death without reservation. The cup invites us then, to give of ourselves to these women until it hurts.

Commitment in the Grail means different things for different people. For some, it is a contract with the sacred. For some that can mean celebrating the Sunday Eucharist. For some it means the quest for the Holy Grail. It means the praises and the heroines of the people of God, the last Passover meal, the blood of Christ, a meal together where friendship is shared, a life of giving and receiving.

The Cup inspires us to have great love for others, especially women. To look towards them with mercy, to be in solidarity with them so that we may walk responsibly and with commitment to the most vulnerable.

For all the, Cup is a sign of complete self giving, of service, love without self interest, inspiration, peace, unity, a universal sign of work, wealth and happiness. It is an invitation to the unity of all races and customs.

From The Circle and the Light: A Search for the Holy Grail, *Sharon Thomson, USA*

This Quest will take you
Where you never asked to go.

It will show you
What you never asked to know.

It will make you work at things
You never asked to do.

It will ask everything of you
And leave you with nothing
You can call your own.

It will leave you empty
And ready
For your heart's deepest longing.

Photo of Grail Cup from Ecuador, *Monica Maher, Ecuador*

"This is how we *framed* the Grail cup on Earth Day here in Ecuador! The placement within the Chakana, Andean cross, gave it new meaning. "

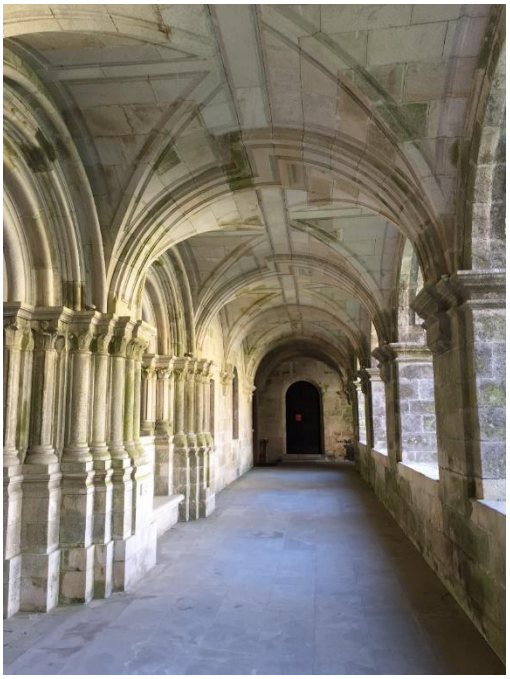
The retreat at Sobrado 2016, *Carol Siemering, USA*

Before my sister died, I would go on many a cruise with her extended family and my grandson. A cruise is so relaxing because you are moored to the ship as your resting place and you make many ports of call where you are opened up to new lands, new adventures, new people.

The Retreat in Sobrado is what I am calling my "spiritual" cruise: the monastery was our "ship" and the "ports of call" were all the wonderful people and experiences we were broken open to.

As has been the case for the last 8 years, we were called together (through Bibi) by the Swedish Grail acting as organizers. The theme this year was *Voices from the Desert*. There were ten of us---Grail and friends of the Grail. The four from Sweden were Bibi Helgesson, Kerstin Jacobsson, Charlotte Uggla and Ulla Bergtsson. From the Netherlands, Chris de Leeuw and Margreet Van Leeuwen. From Portugal, Ticha Vasconcelos and Teresinha Tavares. From the United States, Marian April Goering and myself.

The monastery is believed to have been founded in the 10th century by the Benedictines as a mixed order for both monks and nuns (living separately, of course). In the 12th century the monastery became Cistercian and continued the monastic tradition for centuries The dissolution of the monasteries in Spain in 1835 put an end to the abbey, and the abandoned buildings fell into decay. However, in 1954 the Cistercian monks of Viaceli Abbey in Cóbreces began a restoration of the buildings and were able to resettle the monastery with a new community in 1966.



We were embraced not only by the beautiful stone walls and arches of this monastery but also by the unparalleled hospitality and love of the monks who live their lives there! We were invited to join them as they sang of the Divine Office—matins, lauds, vespers and compline. And although I do not speak Spanish I was continually moved by those recitations of psalms and hymns as the monks sang and spoke in their circle. Brother Manuel, one of the Trappists brothers who came when the community was refounded and who was in a home near by, died while we were there. We participated in the beautiful Mass and burial. He was buried in a simple coffin put into the ground in the monk's little cloister enclosure.

After breakfast we spend the mornings together sharing in different offerings brought by the the women who came. These included reflections on our own experience of "the desert", sacred dance, writing poetry, making mandalas, an introduction to the Desert Mothers and prayerfully and thoughtfully walking the Camino. The Camino or the Way is a pilgrimage that pilgrims have been walking since the 11th century. It begins in France and ends in Santiago de Compestela at the Cathedral of St. James. There are a number of routes and the Monastery is one of the official stops along the northern route where pilgrims can stay and get their Camino "passports" stamped. Every day there were new pilgrims who came to the monastery.

The food was simple and delicious. Bread and jam for breakfast (I admit, I went across the street and bought some butter and some brought instant cereal to supplement the bread). We had soup for lunch and dinner and lovely vegetables and sometimes meat or fish. Always there was fruit. Eating together is always a sacred thing and the food lovingly prepared for us by the monks certainly made it doubly so.

In the afternoon, our "free time" was often quickly filled with such things as the Mass and burial I mentioned earlier, a conversation with Carlos Maria the Portuguese priest some of us originally met at the Spirituality Forum in '06, a lovely long walk along the outside walls of the monastery, a tour of the monastery by one of the monks who was a native English speaker and, most wonderfully, a Eucharistic Celebration which was celebrated by Bibi and assisted by Charlotte who are both ordained Swedish Lutheran priests. The monks (who it seemed to me, to be entirely smitten by the Grail as a result of all those years of retreats and getting to know each other) let us celebrate it in the former Chapter House. A Grail atmosphere was created there as our mandalas sat at the foot of the communion table, wild flowers graced the table itself, and ivy was wound around the candle stands. Grail singing filled the air as we gathered in that circle of communion.

The theme was desert but I for one (and I think I can say for all) found this retreat a wellspring, an oasis, a place to drink deeply and I encourage you all, if it is offered again, to participate!

Sharings from the Retreat, *Marian April Goering, USA; Ulla Bergtsson, Sweden; and Chris de Leeuw and Margreet van Leeuwen, the Netherlands*

From the Retreat by Marian April Goering, USA

Ten women from four Grail countries gathered at an historic monastery in Sobrado Spain for reflection on voices from the desert. The monks in Sobrado practice hospitality for all pilgrims – but the deep friendship of the monks with Portuguese and Swedish Grail members made for an extraordinary welcome.

I have always loved stones. The millions of years old fossil rocks in the streams around Grailville are dear to my heart. In Sobrado, the monastery began in the 10th century and the construction on the church began in the mid-1100s. It has been restored several times – and again much needed restoration is planned for the church as a UNESCO world heritage site along a pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela. In places around the monastery, some of the original stones are still visible and form foundations for the current walls and buildings. These stones inspired me when Carol Siemering led our retreat group in an exercise to write an eight-line poem.

What had fallen to ruin now stands strong,
A mixture of old stones and new.

As morning light plays through archways, I wonder
What did these stones do through the night?
Did they perhaps dance in slow silence
Or leap with secret joy, somewhere out of my view?

Spending time amidst ancient holy stones,

I feel them move my heart.

Reflection on the Grail Retreat in Sobrado 2016 by Margreet van Leeuwen, Dutch Grail

Being back home from our Retreat in Sobrado, - glad to see my partner again and in the meantime enjoying the summer and my work - I can still feel an inner happiness. The happiness of sharing this Grail retreat with nine other women: four Swedish, two Portuguese, two American and my Dutch mate.

The Swedish women, - coming already for years in this characteristic, historical monastery of the Cistercian monks -, had prepared a beautiful program on the theme 'Voices in the desert '.
'Desert' has different connotations. In our retreat it symbolized a quest. A quest for inner rest, peace and love and so did the texts of different desert-mothers we read. Desert is also used as a symbol used to define periods of loneliness in our lives, of deep loss and sorrow, feeling useless, living without perspective. Who does not recognize? The theme was both worked out in texts as well as in prayers. We danced and painted mandalas. We shared the meals, with wonderful soups. As well as enjoying a cappuccino, or a glass of wine on one of the sunny terraces in the village.

We were free to join the monks in their chapel during prayer times. I myself had a preference for the Vespers and the Compline, both in the evening. At the end of the Compline the prior was standing beside the altar with a bowl of water, as a blessing for the night to come.
This retreat means much to me: both food for soul and body, which we shared together. I feel thankful for this precious experience. Thanks to God, the monks and my dear Grail companions!

Sobrado Retreat, Chris de Leeuw, Dutch Grail

Poem of eight lines, with the words: leap - dance - night - play - fall - mix - spend – move

My heart leaps for joy
waking up late at night
wondering how I will spend my day.
Will I express my gratefulness in dancing?
Or will I play with words, with a smile
and be moved by the spirit of our group:
a great mix of laughing, friendship and love.

From the Retreat, Ulla Bergtsson (friend of the Swedish Grail)

My first meeting with the Grail was in Egypt in a retreat center called Anafora in the desert just outside Cairo. I met two Swedish women, Bibi and Kerstin and we had a good talk about women and Christian faith. They told me about a retreat in Spain in the summer of 2016. Now the week is over and tomorrow we go home, we, the ten women who, during a week have talked and shared around the theme "Voices in the Desert". The monastery was a fantastic place and the hospitality was fantastic too.

I want to share some words from words from an author in Ireland, John O'Donohue. He wrote about the word "belong" which in reality is two words: to be and longing. When we shared in the talks and the services, in the silence and in the singing and dancing I felt I belong in a community of women and am now longing for more.

December 2015 - Impressions from my stay at Kisekibaha, *Agatha Modise, South Africa*

THE GRAIL CENTER

It is situated in a valley surrounded by hills and luscious, breathtaking, natural vegetation which I found very impressive. Colorful birds filled the early morning with their music. Its layout, its neatness, and arrangement of buildings according to their uses impressed me as well. The use of modern and dated methods of preparing food caught my attention as was the patience with which our drinking water was purified and stored.

THE GRAIL COMMUNITY

I was struck by their composure, their self-sufficiency, modesty, low-keyed dispositions and simplicity despite some of them being indispensable professionals in a third world country. How they have dispersed themselves in the country and in so doing rendering the Grail visible but in a very unobtrusive manner, I found commendable. Another striking aspect is the means they've made to keep themselves spiritually and physically well provided for. They have a resident priest. Wow! They produce enough to feed themselves and to generate an income.

Learning about how the Masai girls came to live with the Grail women in Kisekibaha made me realize how courageous and determined they are, to make a difference in the life of others

THE REFLECTION PROGRAM

Participating in the 4-days planned discussions took me to the soil in which the Grail is planted and to the core of its steady trunk. I also harvested much from the conversations. I am looking forward to using what I have learned in my community.

On life choices in the Grail, I found it very animating to hear how a woman lives her Grailness and fulfills the Grail mission as a married woman, in the upbringing of her children and in working with families in the church. The talk on the single life choice I also found animating. The Nucleus: the majority of the people in the room were nucleus members. It was invigorating to listen to one of them speak about how she lives this life choice which, for me, is the backbone of the Grail.

It was very refreshing and fulfilling to pray by moving my arms and trunk sedately to the rhythm of sacred music. And to learn about some of the practical ways in which the Nucleus is nourished.

Working in groups on experiences of community life in the Grail illuminated a nurturing aspect of the Grail we who do not live in a Grail community are missing out on. I learned about the benefits and the challenges and how the difficult times as well as the times of conviviality contribute in various ways to the promotion of the spiritual & personal growth of the individual and the community.

Directing our attention to "Blessing the Spaces between Us" and bringing into the discourse Victor Frankl's reference to the existence of a space between a stimulus and a reaction was noteworthy for me. Thanks to the presenter for sharing with us an understanding of how to render the space between us a blessing.

I pray that this community remains steadfast despite the many challenges that are systemic in a third world country.

Reflection Week on the International Nucleus in Uganda and Tanzania (5-17 December 2015) and visit to Angola (March 2016), *Ticha Vasconcelos, Portugal*

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

(Mathew, 13, 45-46)

Uganda and Tanzania: red earth, always the red earth, this time it is the rainy season, when the heat increases with such intensity that it is as if the earth couldn't take it any longer and the heavy sky seems to "shoot" back in a downpour of water, violent, thick, swift rain, flooding everything, clay paths turned into real streams. Afterwards everything calms down, cools, without a hint of dampness, the water penetrates the earth quickly, and the landscape is green, gentle vivid green, thick vegetation springing up from the blessed fertile mother earth.

Formation

There was the dedication in the Grail Nucleus of 11 women (one from Uganda and 10 from Tanzania) and they took therefore the opportunity for two training programs on the Nucleus and the different existing vocational options within the Grail, similarly to what was done in Portugal in All Saints' Week 2013, when I made my own Commitment with the Nucleus.

These programs took place in the Kampala Grail Center (just outside the town), Uganda, and in Kisekibaha, in the region of the Kilimanjaro mountains (the highest mountain in Africa), "near" the town of Moshi …. but what is the meaning of "near" in this immense country? There was a group of facilitators - Lucy Kimaro, Honorata Mvungi and Margarita Shirima (Tanzania), Regina Bashaasha and Josephine Nakagolo (Uganda), Angelina Kyonda (Kenya), Loek Goemans (South Africa), Martha Heidkamp, Mary Kay Louchart and Sharon Joslyn (United States), Christa Werner (Germany); Maria Carlos and I myself (Portugal): about 15 participants in the week in Kampala and 25 in Kisekibaha. From the northern hemisphere two members of the Grail in the United States (Anne Heidkamp and Kate Devlin) and Sónia Monteiro from the Grail in Portugal also participated.

The days were full with two prayers/meditations in the morning and in the evening, meetings, conversations during the whole day with short breaks for meals. The general subject of the two weeks was "Looking for the perfect pearl" (Mathew 13, 45-46) quoted above. Here are some of the themes: history of the Grail; the

international situation of the Grail; Father van Ginneken and his vision of the role of lay women; women as informed Christians; Eucharist as the center of our lives; life in community and spiritual nourishment; testimonies about "my life in the Grail"; life choices in the Grail; commitment in the Nucleus in the light of the Gospels; "What challenges do I face now?"; "What challenges for the Nucleus in today's times?"

Kampala - Uganda

Kampala is a deeply unequal town, with its financial, diplomatic and touristic center right in the middle of the town – hotels with private golf clubs instead of public gardens. The poor are being pushed to the peripheries of an immense town. There you will find street markets or miniature shops lined along the clay ground, open sewers where hens peck. You can find everything: clothes, first aid need products and canned foods, fish from lake Victoria and domestic fowl, and, also, hairdresser, cobbler, chemist, costume jewelry, plastic tanks for collecting rain water, bowls for dish-washing or for washing clothes, *capulanas*, (African women's fabrics) food – fruit, juicy fruit and vegetables, artistically arranged in small colored pyramids.

The Grail center near Kampala is a green oasis on red clay walls, perfectly self-sustained buildings, the huge tanks for collecting rain water, bio-gas, land producing all the food necessary. Simultaneously, jobs for the local population are created. There is a medium-level training course with the agreement of the Kampala University. A life like the one led by the first Christian communities; assets and work sharing are associated to the centrality of the spiritual life.

We also paid a visit to the sanctuary of the Uganda martyrs (in Namugongo) where, at the beginning of the 19th century, a group of Christians (both Catholic and Protestant) were tortured in the most infamous way; they worked for king Kabaka Mwanga, who was then king of the Buganda kingdom. They refused to renounce Christ.

Kisekibaha – Tanzania

The Grail center in Kisekibaha is situated in a fertile green valley on red-ochre land surrounded by green granitic hills. The center is completely self-sustainable and welcoming, with classrooms, small chapel, kitchen and large dining rooms. This center – and from what I understood, the whole Grail work in Tanzania - is a testimony of commitment with the needy, namely in the education of the women, services to the community and the creation of local jobs. In Kisekibaha an absolutely remarkable work with the Maasai girls is accomplished, through an integrated center where they receive care and education, the older girls taking responsibility for the younger ones, experiencing the respect for their culture, and attending school at the same time. Only one Grail member looks after them, Feliciana, who feels happy in the work she does: she took a course on

Montessori pedagogy and she herself manufactured the materials and toys for the children. A collective dormitory where they all sleep (the youngest is four), where each one has a personal box or suitcase with her personals assets and belongings. Feliciana sleeps in the first bed at the entrance of the dormitory and has a very small but comfortable study room, where she makes coffee and tea, warms up her food and keeps records. The sanitary section and the kitchen, quite "basic" are now being renovated with the generosity of US Grail members. In one of the rooms children eat, helping one another. Parents are also included in this communal action that avoids girls being given in marriage at an early age and protects them simultaneously from genital mutilation. Honorata Mvungi, known by some of us and well respected in the communities, does some the field work, together with one Grail member who develops health work, as they connect with the families and convince them to let the Grail look after the girls during the school year.

In Tanzania I also had the opportunity to visit the wonderful Teresa de Avila secondary school, with the Kilimanjaro in the background. Considered as one of the 15 best secondary schools in Tanzania, it is a boarding school. Beyond their regular classes, the students have chores in the kitchen-garden and in the garden, thus providing their daily meals. And always, always, hen-houses, full of domestic fowl. I was informed that it is not always possible to reach a good balance between paying students and non/paying students, but that is the ultimate goal. We visited three other Grail teams that live in the area: one team is in charge of a health center; another supports a community center and another a home for those Grail members working in the secondary school.

Feelings

My visit to Imelda Gaurwa at the Grail center in Moshi was a truly human and spiritual challenge. Here she was, older but clearly herself, brilliant mind as ever, explaining to us the context where the Grail works in Tanzania. I promised her to write about Tanzania and here I am.

I came back growing in respect for Grail work in Uganda and Tanzania. They develop in very deep levels the Grail Vision and Mission! May be an example for us.

So many names dancing within my hears: people, places, times and food, objects and words, prayers in *Swahili.* According to the words of an American anthropologist "let the names chase you." That's how I have lived in these last weeks. Hopefully, I will not let it all vanish as days go by and my memory fades…

Angola

I volunteered to the International Grail to help the growing Grail in Lobito, Angola, after the pioneering work done by Teresinha, and since the Grail in Mozambique declined offering their support because they are more involved in the Grail emerging work in Beira (Mozambique). I was In Angola in the beginning of March together, with Maria Carlos and two other Portuguese young participants who have been developing a Grail project in Lwena, funded by a Portuguese public entity.

The days spent with ten quite young women who consider themselves to be Grail were a deep challenge and a feast for my heart. I found a clearly *lay women's* group. Most of them were married or single mothers, and very committed professionals. We used these brief days (mostly evenings since they worked) to study *Laudato Si'* and the excellent text by Allison Healey, *Out of the Empire,* recently translated into Portuguese. We also did a lot of

reflection about the Grail as a lay women's movement (together with Maria Carlos), we worked around the International Council Manual, specifically on Grail Vision and Mission and the conditions to be affirmed as Grail Movement in Angola. We planned together next work to be done, dividing tasks and responsibilities, as well as my return in January, this time for a longer period (one month).

We also laughed a lot, danced, cooked and interacted with these women's families and children, we visited one parish where one of them worked, etc. The landscape, by the blue ocean, is absolutely beautiful.

Feelings:

It is a joy to be in Africa. I must have African blood, plus I feel so well in my body and mind. Working ***with*** Angola into the Grail, it will be a challenge for my next time and commitments. These women already *love* the Grail, what more can I say? They are quite different from each other, as different as their colored *capulanas* (here they call them *panos*). They offered me a *pano* when I left. I already know and feel that I am one of them, part of them… aware of how Portuguese a woman I am.

Celebration of a life well lived, Dada Rosalia Ann Ogwel, *Grail Kenya*

SUNRISE *6th April 1947* ***SUNSET*** *3rd April 2016*

Psalm 46:10

Birth

The late Dada Rosalia Ann Ogwel was born on 6th April 1947 at Chiga Village. She was the second born child of the late Mzee Pius Nyangun and the late Mama Margarita Nyakoyo. A sister to the late Kelemestina Omwamo and the late John Ogolla.

Spiritual life

She was a committed faithful catholic who was baptized at Kibuye Parish and received confirmation in the same parish. She was also a member of the Ojolla Parish Catholic Church.

Education

The late Rosalia Ann Ogwel started her Primary Education in 1956 at chiga primary school. She successfully completed her standard eight and passed very well. This led her to join a teaching career as an untrained teacher (UT). She later joined an in-service teacher's course at Ng'iya and qualified as a P3 teacher in 1969. She was then promoted as a P2 teacher in 1972 after she amazingly showed competence in the profession and upon passing her Kenya Junior secondary Education (KJSE). She also attained a National Diploma in Development Studies at the Holy Ghost College, Kimmage Manor in Ireland in the year 1988

Work and employment

Rosalia worked in Kibos School for the blind, taught in Kunya Primary School and Aluor Primary School for the blind. In 1979, she was appointed by His Grace Bishop Zaccheaus Okoth to work as a Diocesan Women's programme Coordinator. She participated in officiating Exams as an invigilator and supervisor.

She also worked for the Grail as community development program coordinator from 1988 to 2006.

Without any pay she volunteered her skills in development activities until her health could not allow her.

Grail Life

Vocation

The late Rosalia Ogwel joined the Grail in 1976. She attended a Grail formation in Holland in 1977. She did her commitment and fully become a member of Grail in 1979 at Ahero Parish a commitment that was presided over by Fr. Mark Opiyo. In 1986 together with other Grail members namely, Elizabeth Kibuyua, Mary Busharizi of Uganda and Veronica Murithi, she attended the Grail International formation in Netherlands. She chose a single life as a call in the GRAIL.

Grail and Parish leadership

She was the first Grail National Coordinator and International Grail Council Member in Kenya. She held the positions for two terms (10 years). During her leadership in the Grail, she allowed the group to use her house in Kisumu for meetings before the Grail Center land was bought and house constructed in 1985. She was the first Grail member to stay in the Kisumu Grail Center. Rosalia conducted a programme for young girls *GELP (GETTING EDUCATION FOR LIFE PREPARATION) - a programm* that was started by the Grail in Kisumu Diocese in 1983.

Rosalia was the chair of the Parish Council in Ojolla for two terms (6 years). She also represented the Grail in the parish council for years.

Work and Employment

She enjoyed doing any work assigned to her and did it impressingly. She worked as the coordinator for the COFIDO (COMMUNITY *ORGANIC FARMING INTERGATED DEVELOPMENT)* which benefited the community around Daraja-Mbili in so many ways. Amongst the benefits were; zero grazing, sustainable agriculture, spring water protection, oxen and ox-ploughs, table banking and capacity building.

She was a Grail formator-facilitator, facilitating workshops and seminars that were based on peace and justice. She was in charge of Delta and window trainings too.

Public/Social life

Rosalia excelled in sports and was well known among the best female netball referees who helped in nurturing the young talents. She was a good debator in public forums. Her leadership skills will ever be remembered and missed by many. The late had special and unique character that lured the hearts of many; she was well organized, had a big heart, was principled, kind, honest, hardworking, friendly and prayerful, peace-maker and discouraged laziness just to mention but a few. She leaves a gap that is hard to refill.

Sickness

She was diagnosed with high blood pressure and diabetes in 1991. Even though, with her condition, she remained strong and performed her duties without giving up for so many years. She fought the battle for a long time until 2011 when her condition worsened. She developed Tuberculosis (TB) in 2015 June which weakened her more. Her condition was managed in different hospitals from time to time including The Agha Khan Hospital Kisumu, Port Florence Hospital, Milimani Nursing Home , Avenue Hospital, and finally in Jalaram Hospital where she met her death. She remained strong and nobody thought that she would leave in such a manner. She succumbed to the illness on the 4rd of April 2016.

Appreciation

We appreciate all the doctors who journeyed with our sister, auntie, mother, granny and friend and especially Dr. Samuel Juma who was with her most of the time. Not forgetting Drs. Ally Boy, Isaac Otieno, Francis Ayugi and Dr. Palmer.

We also appreciate the Grail International and Kenya who journeyed with her during her painful moments until the day she left us.

Our appreciation also goes to Magdaline Awino (Maggie) who was Rosalia's caretaker during her last years on earth. May God reward you and open your ways.

Family members who also supported Rosalia in one way or the other during her sickness – thank you abundantly.

Finally the St. Aloysius Ojola Parish priest who also nurtured Rosalia's spiritual life even when she was in her sick bed, we thank you so much.