

C R O S S R O A D S

A Newsletter of the Grail International Leadership Team

January 2017

Table of Contents

Contact Details	2
Letter from the ILT	3
Letter from the Editor <i>Carol Siemering USA</i>	2
From a talk by Rachel Donders at the 1988 IGA.....	4
Portugal Formators Meeting October 2016 <i>Deborah Sullivan USA</i>	6
How do I see the future of the Grail in South Africa? <i>Loretta Joseph South Africa</i>	7
Reflections from the Mexican Grail <i>Reyna Martinez Laguna Mexico</i>	8
Grail Formation in Tanzania 2016 <i>Hellen John Grail Kisekibaha</i>	8
Commission on the Status of Women – 61 (CSW-61) <i>Mary Kay Louchart USA</i>	9
International Day of the Girl in Benguela in Angola <i>Mary Kay Louchart USA</i>	9
In Memory of Alice Gallagher <i>Deidre Cornell USA</i>	11
In Memory of Irene van der Does de Willebois <i>Josette Kersters the Netherlands</i>	12
Joyfully celebrating Christmas and Epiphany with The Bronx Grail <i>Mary Kay Louchart USA</i>	14

Contact Details

<p>Zodwa Mabaso P.O. BOX 82709 Southdale, 2135 Johannesburg South Africa +27-11- 4330891 home +27-82 312 0260 cell zmabaso@gmail.com skype: zodwa123</p>	<p>Marian Schwab 1448 Cotswold Lane Hamilton OH 45013 U.S.A +1-513 737 0595 mgschwab3@gmail.com skype: marianschwab</p>
<p>Maria Carlos Ramos Rua do Saldanha, n°1 2150-162 Golegã Portugal +351-969 669 875 mc_ramos55@hotmail.com skype: mcarlosramos</p>	<p>Crossroads Editor Carol Siemering 16 Smith Ct West Newton MA 02465 USA + 1-617-244-4517 cell carol_siemering@yahoo.com</p>
<p>International Finance Officer Mary Farrell 61 Mount Vernon St Boston MA 02108-1393 USA +1-617 275 3320 cell mkf@puck61.net skype: m.k.farrell</p>	<p>Administrative Assistant Mary Omedo c/o Nieuwegracht 51 3512 LE Utrecht The Netherlands +31-74 707 4273 home iltsecr@thegrail.org skype: omedoma1</p>

Letter from the Editor *Carol Siemering USA*

The theme of this issue of Crossroads is "How do you see the future of the Grail in your Country? A number of participants who attended Formators meetings have contributed. I have included a piece by Rachel Donders which was used in the Portugal Formators Meeting. There are other articles of interest about events that have and will happen. Also two In Memory pieces. I want to thank Judith Blackburn who has come on board as my proofreader and my dear Mary Omedo who has always helped put these issues wonderfully together ever since I have been editor.

Letter from the ILT

Dear Grail Sisters around the world,

Happy New Year, everyone! Greetings of the new year are being heard everywhere around us, with wishes for happiness as we begin again. Somehow we hope for happiness that last year failed to bring. We hope for one another and for ourselves that simply turning the page on the calendar brings us an opportunity to start again: to be kinder to one another this year, to be stronger than ever in our fight for justice, to open our hearts even more to those who suffer, to pray more faithfully and keep our wits about us, even as time marches on.

Within the Grail internationally, we are aware of preparations on many fronts. Looking ahead to July and the IGA at Fatima in Portugal, countries around the Grail world have been reflecting on issues they want addressed, and have begun sending those agenda items to the ILT. By March 15, countries will be sending in names of their delegates; and by April 1, a list of the mission-driven work they are pursuing.

Meanwhile, Grail members everywhere have been urging others they respect to consider running for the International Leadership Team so their country can nominate them for the new ILT. This is the last year in the term of the three current members, so the new ILT will be announced by November.

To make that possible, the International Election Team in Australia will ask nominees for their photos and resumes by March. Because the election and the IGA are synchronized with each other this year, nominees will be able to attend the IGA in July and interact there with the delegates representing each of their countries. Voting will happen as soon as the IGA is over, with ballots distributed to voting members on the first of August.

In addition to those two streams of activity within the Grail internationally – the ILT election and the preparation for the IGA – regular activities continue as planned. Already in January, the Social Methodologies program has been happening in Brazil. In February, the third in a series of three international training programs for Formators (following those in South Africa and Portugal) will take place in Quito, Ecuador. This will be the first time that Grail members from sponsoring countries will gather with new women from the four “emerging countries” of Paraguay, Ecuador, Angola and Honduras – a sign of new life in this new year.

The minute we back up from preoccupation with international Grail operations, we are confronted by the world we live in this year of 2017. We know that the horrors of 2016 follow us into the new year, along with the challenge to discern our response as Grail: continued war and so many families fleeing the violence; hunger and drought and climate change; exploitation of children, trafficking of women; the radicalization of young people with no hope for a better future; deforestation and pollution; suffering from malaria, HIV and ZIKA; human rights abuses, the acceptance of hate speech and the rise of hate groups throughout the West – injustice that makes us angry and tears at our heart.

“Sometimes I’ve been terribly oppressed by the chaos of my thoughts,” Teresa of Avila once confessed and we can identify with her, given the problems of our day that shout to us. “The noises in my head are so loud,” she said. “My head is so filled with the blasting of an over-flowing rushing river....[Yet] the tranquility and love in my soul aren’t affected by this noise. While my physical mind races on, the mind of my soul remains clear.”

That is our wish for the Grail this new year: that for each of us, the “mind of our soul” remain clear, that we “try to be genuinely Grail,” as Rachel Donders asked many years ago; that we remember who we are and work

valiantly to respond as a faith community to the challenges of our day with imagination and creativity, carrying embers of light and love.

The infrastructure of the international Grail – all the busy-ness of international meetings and elections – is only there to support those of us working at our mission, planted where we are, each of us, in the today that belongs to all of us. In that, may we find fulfillment.

Happy new year, Grail sisters!

Zodwa, Marian and Maria Carlos

From a talk by Rachel Donders at the 1988 IGA

The following is a part of transcript of a talk given by Rachel Donders for the IGA in 1988 that was used this year at the Portugal Formators Meeting. It seems still very timely to me although almost thirty years old. (Editor)

From Charles Davis: “Faith is the experience of a reality, felt in the darkness that surrounds human existence.”

I can say yes to this. It is an answer that satisfies me. It is the experience of a mystery, the great Mystery that surrounds us and which inhabits us, the Ground of our being, my being, your being.

It is a personal experience, an interior experience. It is a universal experience too, not particularly Christian, but given to all who sincerely seek. It is the undercurrent in all great religions and even in art and science. And it is the deepest reason for hope... for there is a follow-up. And here comes my next quotation (from Lonergan): “Faith (that inward experience of the Mystery) places human life in the horizon of the Transcendent.” It places my whole life, all life towards a future. I love that image of the horizon! My life has a horizon, a vision—again—the far and high spiritual good of the Grail saga. And the horizon is not a line, a wall, a hazy cloud; it is the openness of the transcendent: it is the same Mystery I experience in the depth of my being, calling me from Beyond, from the Future that is the “extreme of religiosity”: all is taken up in the experience of the Mystery.

That is for me personally the faith-dimension now. Maybe you recognize yours in this, although you express it differently?

However we should not leave aside one important point: we are talking about the Grail as a faith COMMUNITY. This seems to mean that the faith experience is not just an individual thing, but that there is a full recognition of each other, a gravitation towards each other, a sharing. A faith community means, as I understand it, that we share faith experience, that we are geared towards that horizon together. This can be in words, in symbols, in action, in celebration. And isn't that what the Grail is all about, sharing the faith dimension in ever-widening circles?

Certainly there are different levels on which we form community. There is the existential level of womanhood, the practical level of our work, the concrete level of space and time in which we find ourselves with others in mutual dependence (in this period, in this country). And all that can be community-building.

But when it is said and done, it seems to me that the faith dimension, the faith core, mutually recognized and communally celebrated, is our deepest bond. Maybe we have to become more creative in this respect and this can be a real challenge for the Grail in this period. I use the word “challenge”. My “Evening knowledge”, the

nuance in what one knows after long experience which is different from the light which shines in the beginning, recognized many challenges in our history over the years, and this has often involved change! And I would like to stress this. To my mind, it belongs to the nature of the Grail; it belongs to our genuine identity, to our historic being: to evolve with the times, to change according to the messages the Spirit sends around the world.

And I beg you all, sitting here as representatives, for now, for tomorrow, please try to be genuinely Grail! Respond to the challenges before us!

I myself see in this time a three-fold challenge, connected with our orientation to a future.

The first, as I said just now, is the challenge of building a faith community. Concretely that means coping with our plurality in all the expressions of our faith. But not only coping with it, or just living with it, but fully accepting and even embracing it. The whole world is a world of pluralism, hiding a tremendous richness. Why should the Grail be some dull monolithic bloc? Anyhow we will never be able to go back to uniformity—not in the Church, not in the Grail.

Somewhere I read there are three ways of dealing with pluralism in a problem: by conforming, by co-existence, and by convergence. Am I right to think that we are somewhat in the realm of co-existence? Are we inclined to think “You, Grail Group, you do it that way, we in our Grail group do it this way. You think thus, we think so...that’s just how it is!” Of course, this is already something; we allow each other to be and to think differently. But we must go further. There must be more interaction, more inter-penetration. The Networks are in that line. And that means there are some great qualities we have to develop: trust and communication. Communication in trust--that is the first challenge I see.

The second is to become more relevant to our time and to a new generation in our language, our structure, our methods. This asks for study, openness, reflection, exchange, new initiatives, new forms. It asks for creativity in our programmes, in the symbols we use. Let us not put wine in new skins...and let us give a chance to the creative talents among us, and to the daring ones!

The third challenge I see is the need of the Grail for expansion, for growth. If we want to be meaningful in the world in the next period (12 years??? ‘til the year 2000?), we have to reach out to new regions, geographically and spiritually. That too would ask creativity and trust. The dynamic elements and figures among us must be given a chance. I do not mean to say that they have not been given a chance, but maybe they could be more challenged by the community and their efforts could be more channeled. We have a Network for Formation---why not a Network or a committee or whatever for EXPANSION? We need to GROW!

I must end.

How?

So many words have been used, so many waves have gone around our ears and our minds. Let me ask you to turn inwardly now for a few moments, to be silent together after these words. Let us enter into the faith dimension in which our lives are placed, remembering what Meister Eckhart says:

“THERE IS NOTHING SO MUCH LIKE GOD AS SILENCE”

Portugal Formators Meeting October 2016 *Deborah Sullivan USA*

After weeks of preparation: filling out paperwork, checking schedules, buying tickets, choosing gifts to bring, preparing prayers, and the most stressful choice of all, *deciding what to pack*, four of us settled into our seats for an overnight flight to Portugal!

Terri Carter, Pam Cobey, Emily Snyder and I left Newark airport at 8:15 pm on October 6 and woke up in Lisbon, Portugal, at 8:20 am on October 7. We were tired and nervous as we made our way through long lines, wondering how we would find our Grail guide through the throng of people. When we finally spilled out the doors, we saw a tiny gray-haired woman holding a Grail sign. Ana Oom found a taxi-van large enough for all of us and our voluminous luggage. Ana got us to the train station, bought our tickets and handed each of us a bottle of water and a bag with a breakfast pastry before we boarded the train. So began a wonderful experience of being tended and cared for by the women of the Portuguese Grail so that we were free to concentrate on our work.

We were met at the train station by Elsa Coutinho and Maria Carlos Ramos, and driven to the Golega Grail center. Golega is a beautiful little town that was fun to explore when we had free time, and the center was gorgeous. The building itself was lovely, as were the “ladies of the house” who fed us and pampered us. When you walked out the back door you were in a courtyard surrounded by fruit trees, and the gardens below and around the building were full of vegetables and flowers. They had trellises everywhere with vining flowers and assorted (and sometimes unfamiliar) vegetables. These fruits and vegetables provided the food for the center, and it was delicious! They had cisterns and other water catchment systems for watering the gardens, and they leased the back property to neighbors to graze sheep. Every inch of the land was beautiful and productive.



The actual program began on Saturday, which allowed us to adjust to the time change and allowed us to get to know the other participants. There were women there from Portugal, Sweden, Italy, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Australia and Brussels. Each morning we began the program with prayer or meditation, then moved into the topics of the day. The topics presented ranged from Grail Spirituality to Conversational Learning in the Grail. We then explored each topic in small groups

before coming together to share our thoughts with the larger group. We had lively discussions despite the language barrier. English was the second, third or even fourth language for the Europeans. We Americans, with only one language, felt humbled and vowed to learn at least one other language in the near future. Our commonalities more than made up for the differences, and we were all Grail!

“We are drawn together by a common vision, in spite of our great diversity we share a common longing to find meaningful ways of contributing to the transformation of our world into a place of love and justice.” (“What is the Grail” from Grail Entering in the 21st Century.)

We also have much in common when it comes to membership. The Europeans and Australians are all facing the new realities of an aging and shrinking membership as well as an inability to attract young women. Sound familiar? There was also much talk about “the elbow of time” in which we find ourselves. How do we adapt to the times and currents while maintaining our spiritual fervor? What ails this world where we live? Whom do we serve?

On Wednesday we took the train into Lisbon to see the graffiti art (Galleria De Arte Publica) in an African immigrant housing project. It was amazing!

<https://ferreiramonteirophtography.wordpress.com/2016/02/02/street-art-at-quinta-do-mocho/>

We had a whirlwind tour around Lisbon, ate authentic Portuguese food and ran to catch the taxi back to the train station and then back to the center.

After 10 days we were ready to head home. Our heads were swimming with all we had learned and experienced. We bonded with all our international Grail sisters, eating, singing, praying and dancing together. Our hearts were full of love for all these wonderful women, both the women who tended us with such loving care and the women who took the time to attend this program. We promised to stay in touch and continue to learn from each other. Together we will transform the world!

How do I see the future of the Grail in South Africa? *Loretta Joseph South Africa*

I see the Grail in the future as learning from the past, by answering for ourselves and our local, provincial, national, and international groups: What worked, what did not work, and what can be done differently.

Understanding the purpose as to why the Grail was established in the first place, who all were involved, what are the current issues in South Africa affecting women and girls? How involved am I as a Grail member in the life and work of the Grail?



I see the Grail in the future as diverse, colourful, creative and giving positive direction to the most vulnerable women and girls in society. I see the elders in the Grail giving young women permission to continue with the change we seek as a Grail. I see the young women and girls give themselves permission to embrace their authenticity and convictions to advance the work of the Grail.

I see the role of the Grail in the future empowering women and girls in South Africa to break free from stigmas and discrimination and to critically engage the status quo through having uncomfortable conversations that

ultimately lead to positive solutions around culture, gender roles and decision-making, racism, sexism, and human trafficking--to name a few issues needing attention.

I see the spiritual aspect of the Grail move into the mainstream economy to create synergy to narrow the gap between rich and poor in our country so that the downtrodden can become economically sustainable and in turn continue to let the spirit of God set all people free.

I see in the future a generation of women and girls whose inner leadership is ignited through vocational trainings, mentoring, and coaching, to recognize and develop the potential and gifts of each woman and girl child growing into the Grail for the next generation.

I see the Grail as me, I see the Grail as where I am, I see the Grail as my family, I see the Grail as a safe space, I see the Grail as complex as any human being is in the search for social, political, and economic justice.

Reflections from the Mexican Grail *Reyna Martinez Laguna Mexico*

Nuestras reflexiones y preocupaciones en nuestro grupo, es que nos estamos haciendo grandes, y la salud es un desafío. Pero nuestro llamado, a través de los trabajos y grupos nos dan esperanza, hacia el futuro y nuestras esperanzas son 5 mujeres mas jóvenes, involucradas en los trabajos del Grial, que el espíritu que movió al principio al grupo, nos mueva ahora.

Olvidarnos un poco de nosotras mismas y pensar en los demás, porque somos igualem ante el PADRE que vive en el alma de cada una de nosotras, El PADRE que vive en nuestro interior, da poca importancia a nuestro exterior, si somos blancas, negras, pobres o ricas, de una o de otra religión.

Ante Dios las diferencias externas no cuentan, solo tiene importancia el interior, si somos buenas o malas, generosas o avaras, caritativas o egoístas.

Este será nuestro mayor desafío a lograr.

Our reflections and concerns in our group are that we are getting older, and health is a challenge. But our call, through the works and groups, gives us hope into the future and our hopes focus on younger women involved in the work of the Grail, that the spirit that moved the group at the beginning, move us now.

Let us forget a little of ourselves and think of others, because we are equal before the FATHER, who lives in the soul of each one of us, the FATHER that lives in our interior gives little importance to our exterior, if we are white or black, poor or rich, of one religion or another.

Before God external differences do not count; only the interior has importance, whether we are good or bad, generous or miserly, charitable or selfish. This will be our biggest challenge to achieve.

Grail Formation in Tanzania 2016 *Hellen John Grail Kisekibaha*

This is a group of the young women who are in the formation in Tanzania. They are in different levels: first year, second year and third year. In this program they are guided by their formators who are travelling with them in their daily life. According to our system, each group has their own syllabus which include different subjects such as: Bible, Liturgy, Prayer, Grail, Community life, English, Basic Computer, Church history, Agriculture etc.

At the same time they contribute working in different projects at the Grail Centre, Kisekibaha as a part of their self sustaining economically. They also take care of our environment by planting trees and care of the whole environment.

After this formation program, the girls are sent to different teams for one year for their community experience.

Commission on the Status of Women – 61 (CSW-61) *Mary Kay Louchart USA*

It's hard to believe that it is already time to prepare for CSW! Seems like we just finished CSW-60! On January 2nd Nolutando (Thando) Nzimande from Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa, arrived. She will be serving as one of our interns this year. We are especially happy that she is able to be an intern as she attended CSW a few years ago and so knows what to expect of CSW, the winter weather in NYC, the Bronx Grail Center and the team here, etc.



Our second intern is the granddaughter of Ann Marie Czyzewski: Rebecca Lamm. Rebecca is a student at Pratt University in Brooklyn and was looking for an internship with international dimensions. We welcome the two of them.

If any Grail member 'out there' is still interested in attending CSW-61, March 13 through 24, 2017, please contact Mary Kay immediately. The deadline to get UN passes is quickly approaching.

The priority theme is "Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work." The Commission will also evaluate progress in the implementation of the agreed conclusions from its fifty-eighth session in 2014 on "Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls."

As we mentioned last year, housing is not as convenient for us now because we no longer have access to the convent. The Bronx Grail Center still houses all of the girls, but adults and young women are welcomed by local Grail members and neighbors. We try to share a meal together every evening as well as share what we experienced during the day, what sessions we will attend the next day, and we pray together. If you have not as yet read the report from CSW-60, please do. It gives a wonderful taste of what happens at CSW and it can serve as a reminder for you to pray for us in March as we live a microcosm of the international Grail. This year we will be from Mexico, Canada, Portugal, the Netherlands, Sweden, South Africa, Mozambique, Uganda, USA. And you can pray right now that they all get visas! (For the report, check the international website or contact Mary Omedo; iltsecr@thegrail.org or Mary Kay Louchart at Grail-IPT@juno.com).

International Day of the Girl in Benguela in Angola *Mary Kay Louchart USA*

You have read and heard about the Grail's involvement in the International Day of the Girl. However, we have still one more observance to share: from Angola. The GLUNN (Grail Link to the United Nations) is so pleased and proud of what we have done for and with girls around the world. The article below comes from the Portuguese

website, translated and edited by Sonia Monteiro with additional information about the beginnings of the Grail in Angola from Abida Jamal.

The Grail is in beginning stages in Angola. A little update: Since 2004 there is a group of young professional women who are very interested in the Grail because of the work that Teresinha Tavares from Portugal was doing with the women from various Dioceses in Angola (PROMAICA). Actually the group is getting support from the Grail in Portugal. Previously, some of the participants of this group had the opportunity to be part of other international Grail gatherings such as international formation meeting in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, international formation meeting in Golega, Portugal. Currently, there are two preparing to be part of the formation meeting in Quito, Ecuador, February 2017.

The emerging Grail group in Benguela, Angola, gathered a group of 15 girls from different urban and suburban neighborhoods of the Diocese to celebrate the International Day of the Girl. Here is what they shared: After a prayer that brought us together, we participated in a dynamic that reminded us that we do not need to abandon others to accomplish our goals but instead we can do it together. In short, together, helping each other, we can go further and beyond our own capacities.

We did a listening survey, addressing some of the issues that girls are facing in school, family house, neighborhood, in the church and in our country. Some of the problems that we talked about are related with the lack of relationship, intimacy and sharing moments among families. This problem can have different causes. According to these group of young girls, this apparent lack of interest from parents is connected, among other reasons, with financial issues, 'irregular' families (different parents among brothers and sisters). In the school, the problems are different. One of the issues discussed in this context was the lack of preparation and the absence of ethical principles among some professors. Finally, violence and sexual harassment were two of the major problems that girls experiencing in their neighborhoods. In the final part of our gathering, girls shared some of the possible ways to overcome each of the problems mentioned.

The Grail group in Angola applied during this activity some of the tools and dynamics that they learnt from training courses of MAP (Mozambique and Angola Project), a formation project, held by the Portuguese Grail group in Angola and based on the TFT (Training for Transformation) methodology. One of the practical things the girls learned was how to make wallets for women from recycled material such as empty milk containers. Their plan is to continue this initiative in order to help girls get out of the financial dependence that leads them to early marriage and early pregnancy.



In Memory of Alice Gallagher *Deidre Cornell USA*



May 5, 1924 - October 23, 2016

Alice was so much a part of my growing into the Grail that I cannot even pinpoint the moment I first met her. Alice was always on the move, impossible to pin down but ever-present on the scene. She had the talent of "working a room:" she could enter any gathering and size things up. She would figure out who was who, who they should be introduced to, and how to connect them. She had a genuine interest in people. Alice's ready laugh and adventuresome spirit were irresistible.

Alice especially loved international programs, and believed in the power of bringing together women from around the world. She supported many international programs, often doing backstage work because that was what needed to be done. As a college student preparing for my first trip out of the country, to Nicaragua, I spent a memorable day at Cornwall with Alice, Licha Kramer and Peg Linnehan and others. Alice shared the story of her peace and justice delegation to El Salvador: they landed at the airport, only to be denied entry! They returned, never having gotten off the plane.

When my husband and I married, Alice read one of the Prayers of the Faithful. She presented us with a symbol of the beautiful planet Earth. Hers was a prayer for humanity to live in harmony with Mother Nature, and she read it with unforgettable poise!

Alice relished being a member of the Cornwall team and the wider Grail community. Her collaboration with Peg, Cay Charles, Ruth Chisholm, Ann Burke and and Audrey Schomer, who lived locally, was a fruitful time. It was during these years that I got to know her.

Overseeing the Phoenix and rentals, Alice was a "hostess with the mostest." She loved to give hospitality to Grail guests and was zealous in caring for the house. And although she lived simply, she had an eye for the finer things (having started her working life in retail). She knew, for example, what piece of good furniture would be perfect for someone's new apartment. She was always on the lookout for nice clothing or furnishings to pass along.

Alice loved a good party -- and she loved others to enjoy a good party. (I will never forget her pleasure in watching our toddlers dance a two-step.) She treasured her siblings, nieces and nephews. She maintained friendships spanning several decades with Penny and Helen. She was a woman full of surprises. Alice and Ann rarely took center stage, which made their "opera" performances at international gatherings even more hilarious. Alice somehow managed to get tickets to the opening night of River dance -- prime seats, no less!

When Alice moved to Mt Alverno, along with her very dear friends Cay and Ruth, it was the beginning of a difficult time for Alice. She who so prized her freedom could no longer come and go as she pleased. She made the most of it, however; when we visited, often it would take me awhile to actually *find* her in the building!

It was hard to witness Alice's diminishment. Grail members and especially the Cornwall community visited Alice, Ruth and Cay often, with her cousin Kate Twohy managing her care and Maureen [Tate] checking in regularly. Because it is her birthday, Cinco de Mayo was joyous, but each year her health declined and her memory faded. I sometimes reminded Alice, "You went to Egypt!" "You travelled all over Europe!" "You lived with Bob

Hope's family!" "You loved the beach and the racetrack at Del Mar (California)!" Sometimes she would remember. Other times she would chuckle a gurgling laugh and say, "I did? Imagine that."

My last visit to Valley View, in late September, was on a cold afternoon. Alice was confined to bed. When I walked in, her face lit up. She took my hand, and, finding it chilled, pressed it to her heart. She pulled me closer, looking deep into my eyes. With effort, she whispered emphatically, "You. Look. WONDERFUL." Then she leaned back to rest, exhausted, having given me one great, last gift. Alice's usual miraculous way of making me feel fully human, fully alive.

The celebration at Cornwall was a lovely, fitting tribute, planned by Kate and hosted by the Cornwall community. Sharon Thomson, Simonetta Romano, Lucy Jones and Kathy Hurley have certainly carried on the tradition of Grail hospitality at Cornwall. Alice would have been pleased by the beautiful luncheon and warm welcome -- and by seeing that the Phoenix is so lovingly maintained. Grail members and friends, and of course, members of Alice's family, came from all over. Fr. Mike Perry, who was ordained in Brooklyn Diocese at the time Alice was active there, noted that Alice had been present at his first Mass; it seemed fitting that he should preside at her last Mass. I am certain that her spirit hovers there, in the meditation garden of the beautiful Cornwall Center she so loved, near Ruth and Olive and at one with nature. Her restless, adventurous heart finally coming to rest. But I can also imagine her at that great cosmic party, the celestial banquet, where she will surely "work the room." Her timing was impeccable, just in time for All Saints' Day. And her ready laugh, so eager for good news, surely resounds in good company.



In Memory of Irene van der Does de Willebois

Josette Kersters the Netherlands

Irène van der Does de Willebois; 15-9-1922—18-10-2016

The news that in the morning of 18th October Irène van der Does de Willebois died of a cardiac infarct came as a shock to all of us.

Irène was born in 's-Hertogenbosch, the eldest of five children, three brothers and one sister in a deeply Catholic family very engaged in the Church. Thanks to a Danish grandmother, the international aspect of life was, as it were, a natural part of her growing up and education. She studied languages among others at the Sorbonne in Paris and at Leiden University with a special interest for the Russian language, history, culture and the Russian Orthodox liturgy.

Before joining the Grail in 1950, Irène had worked for the British Red Cross (during the war), later as direction secretary and as a teacher of French. She made her dedication in the nucleus of the Grail in 1953.

Irène has had a very interesting and busy, but rather lonely life as far as the Grail is concerned; her interest was a very special one, not always well understood at the time.

Through her trips to Russia and the Ukraine in a time that this was not the normal thing to do..., as well as her knowledge, experience and work, Irène was a real asset for the ecumenical movement in a rather early period.

When a new bishop in Paris re-organised the diocese, Irène, who was at that time responsible for the diocesan ecumenical office, lost her job. She did not find in the Grail the support she needed and decided not to take part any longer in Grail activities; however, she remained informed and read all communication. She also maintained sporadic contact with individual Grail members. In recent years the contact became stronger and more frequent, resulting, only about a month ago, in a visit to the Grail house in Utrecht to tell her life story in our "Kitchen Table" programme*. No one expected at that moment that she would leave us so soon. Knowing that now, like the rest of us, Irène also had a very good feeling about the day. We are grateful for this warm and inspiring reunion, which became a farewell.

Let us sing the Russian Alleluia in thanksgiving for Irène's life and witness.

****The photo was taken on that occasion.***

Joyfully celebrating Christmas and Epiphany with The Bronx Grail *Mary Kay Louchart USA*

Laura Pagoada-Mellado, Grail member, and family go upstate every year to cut down their tree. This year, we joined them. Cutting down was one thing....bringing it home and setting up the huge tree was quite an adventure! Loreto Couceiro from Portugal spent Christmas and brought in the New Year with us.

Some of the celebrations:

- Laura, Mary Kay, Sharon and Sonia joined by Biuma, Mbelu and Tina Kalala formed an important part of the Midnight Mass choir...it was beautiful
- Laura and her daughter, Monica, came for a meal and gift sharing around the tree in the Bronx Center
- Angie, Loretto, Mary Kay, Sharon and Sonia shared gifts on the 30th---singing with great gusto: The Twelve Days of Christmas
- The same crew went up to visit Cay Charles where we ate goodies and sang more Christmas carols
- We spent a quiet New Year's Eve with prayer at the Bronx Center...went to bed before midnight!
- January 6th took Mary Kay, Sharon and Thando (our GLUNN intern from Hlokozi, Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa) to Laura's to celebrate the Three Kings and eat the traditional Rosca! The other tradition: whomever gets a plastic baby 'Jesus' in the Rosca has to give a party on the Feast of the Presentation on February 2nd!
- Because everyone would be away on the 6th, we had our Epiphany prayer/celebration on the 4th. We usually pray compline in the evening so it became a kind of 'compline for the journey', compline for the year ahead. In addition to various readings and prayers that we brought, Thando, being the youngest, switched Jesus from the baby child to the toddler. (Yes, using Trina's beautiful crèche.) Then, as we sang We Three Kings, Sonia, Angie and Thando brought up one of the kings as we sang a different verse. How beautifully the magi entered into our crèche. Also in our crèche are gifts from many lands: Brasil: crystal stone, Mexico: black earthen pot, Philippines: soap, Uganda: basket and tea, Tanzania: coffee, Portugal: shell, seed: Papua New Guinea and animals and angels from all over! It's not very clear in the photo, but we also have women coming Latin America and Africa as part of the crèche.

So, that is a bit of sharing our Christmas-Epiphany with you. Want to join us next year?



Angelica Contreras Mary Kay Louchart Sharon Joslyn
Sonia Monteiro Thando Nzimande