# C R O S S R O A D S

*A Newsletter of the Grail International Leadership Team*

*April 2019*

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# Letter from the ILT

April 2019

Dear Grail Sisters Everywhere,

This issue of Crossroads focuses on **Laudato Sí** and climate change themes, while at the same time our Grail sisters in Beira – Mozambique are suffering from the devastation that continues following the cyclone. The daily suffering is unimaginable and life as they have known it has been irrevocably altered. May we join in solidarity as our sisters live the horror of what climate change really means.

Since our last letter to you in Crossroads, we have had ILT visits to our 3 emerging countries of Angola, Paraguay and Ecuador. Mary and Dilma were accompanied by members of the New Countries Team for these visits with Abida Jamal and Florence Asiimwe joining us in Angola and Rosa Ruiz attending the meetings in Paraguay and Ecuador. These visits and meetings focused on the ILT getting to know each of the members and to learn more about the Grail as a group in each of these countries. As we visited each country, we have deep gratitude to the countries that have journeyed with each over many years: Brazil with Paraguay, the US with Ecuador and Portugal with Angola. Thank you all for the strong relationships which you have built. Your hard work and effort over many years really shows in what has been developed.

We were privileged to spend time in Mexico, where we participated in the National Mexican Grail Meeting which was held in Cuernavaca and attended by almost 50 Grail women from all over this country. They arrived with open hearts to greet one another and to hear the stories of the Grail work in each of their regions and communities. As they gave their reports, we were heartened by the diversity of age and backgrounds that they bring to the Grail Community. We could all affirm that the work being done is making a tremendous difference in the lives of many. During this meeting, the Mexican Grail took the opportunity to honor the life of Terre, Marie Therese Mc Dermitt, who is now 94 years old. Terre began the Mexican Grail in the '60's and prior to that had been one of the founders of the Grail in Uganda in the early 50's and then on to South Africa where she had a great impact in the late '50' and early '60's. As ILT we thoroughly enjoyed hearing all of the stories and tributes. In addition, being with Terre connected us with many aspects of Grail history.

While in Mexico, the ILT welcomed the coordinators of our Global Networks. During the meeting each Network provided an inspiring and engaging report of their work, their Network's membership and their needs going forward. The meeting ended with a highly interactive conversation with Cristina dos Anjos Conceiçao, the coordinator for the 100 Years of The GRAIL Celebration to be held in Brazil in 2021. We will have much more to share on that following the IC Meeting in July 2019.

Our focus now is on preparing for the IC meeting to be held in Tanzania in July 2019. Also at this time, our girls and young women are gathering in New York for the CSW (The Commission on the Status of Women) and that will be followed by the Indigenous Forum at the UN.

By the time you receive Crossroads, our focus will be on Holy Week and Easter. May this liturgical season remind us of how our lives are a constant process of dying in so many ways so as to make way for renewal and change. And in a spirit of Lent, Sarah Mabanja, coordinator for the Earth Network, teamed up with Mexican Grail member, Maya Gallardo to create a Lenten Campaign helping us reflect on climate change

and actions we can takes. This was developed for WhatsApp users and we are hoping this has been yet another viable way to communicate among us.

We are always so appreciative of your emails, WhatsApp messages, hand-written notes that find their way to us and your big hugs and smiles as we meet in person. And as we close, may we all join our hearts as we lift up our sisters in Beira and throughout Mozambique as they continue to struggle for survival.

Dilma, Maria Carlos and Mary

# Note from the Editor Carol Siemering

*The ILT requested that this issue of Crossroads the ILT asked that the theme of this Crossroads focus on Laudato Si, climate change, the environment, and other related topics telling us about the activities you have done on these topics during the last 3 years (2015 through 2018). I must say I was so touched and humbled (feeling I am doing so little) by the submissions we received. Included are other articles as well. Thank you once again to my proofreader Judith Blackburn and our wonderful Mary Omedo who formats it all!*

# Summary activities of Grail members in Brussels/Belgium: Didine Petit

- **to prevent climate change**

**Individually:**

- Signing contracts with Energy Providers to only buy "Green Energy" from them.
- Only installing energy saving LED lighting.
- Switching off the lights when leaving a room.
- Avoiding ironing our clothes, unless really needed.
- Using warm sweaters and blankets to reduce heating in winter.
- Walking, cycling and taking public transport of trains, trams, underground metro and buses.
- When having to use airplanes, we should calculate the CO2 waste and pay to specific organisations the money needed for planting trees to compensate it. For example, using one round trip flight from Amsterdam to Tanzania for the IC Grail meeting would produce 1.8 tons of CO2. Brussels Grail could compensate for it by paying 18 € to plant trees through environmental projects in Africa and Europe (https://www.treesforall.nl)
- Providing good information where needed, about the aims of our actual Belgian "Youths for Climate", who are demonstrating peacefully every Thursday during class hours to demand more action from the Belgian national and regional politicians. It started after our governments refused to sign the more ambitious Climate Pacts of the Benelux and of the European Community. Most of the school directors and parents accept the youths' action, because it also means a very good learning experience in their life! They were inspired by the Swedish girl, Greta Thunberg, who started with this protest and recently spoke to the world leaders at the Davos World Economic Forum. These youths have now also started cooperating with university scientists to find the best solutions for our planet and take into account as well "the end of the month", i.e. the financial burden of climate measures for less

privileged people, as “the end of the world” that would occur due to dramatically increased temperatures.

**Together:**

- We only forward emails/WhatsApp messages when meaningful and only to the persons concerned.
- We live in a city, close by public transport and shops, which prevents us owning too many cars for travelling.
- We share a car.
- Two Grail members are renovating a house for “intergenerational living in solidarity”, insulating the windows, roofs and floors as much as possible to save energy. At the moment the lower part of the house is heated by a central gas heating boiler with a high output. The heating of water at the upper floors is produced by a heat pump water heater. We get professional advice for the energy performance of buildings, which has become a rule in Brussels Region. It includes advice about getting governmental subsidies to reduce the ecological footprint of houses. We talked in advance with our architect, entrepreneurs and providers about our requests concerning sustainability and sometimes challenged them. Together we try to reach this aim as much as possible in the actual situation. We keep in mind solar energy for the future and we also dream of creating a sustainable garden when the renovation of this house is ready.

➢ **To protect environment and health**

It is important to:

- Use products that are produced as close by as possible to diminish air pollution due to longer transport.
- Avoid non-returnable packaging and bring along reusable shopping bags.
- Sort our household waste for recycling, which has become compulsory in all Belgian municipalities.
- Use non-toxic paint, glues and detergents, e.g. water-based paint instead of oil-based paint and wood that does not contain more formaldehyde than the natural low level of the wood itself.
- Replace liquid hand soap in plastic bottles with hard soap and, if needed, refill liquid soap in reusable bottles.
- Use second-hand furniture.
- Encourage Scouting for the kids, where they learn and practice love for nature.
- Be alert to diminish our use of water.
- Eat sustainable food when possible.
- Reduce animal food consumption, as much as possible, e.g. by eating “Mediterranean food”, also called “Flexitarian vegetarism”. It means many plain grains, legumes, vegetables, fruit, nuts, seeds, varied oils, and few eggs, dairy, poultry and meat, unless medical indications are given for increasing body proteins and amino acids. It is interesting to read the article in *Lancet* about this topic, which combines scientific research on sustainability and health (Marco Springmann, Keith Wiebe, Daniel Mason-D’Croz, Timothy B Sulser, Mike Rayner, Peter Scarborough. *Lancet Planet Health*. October 2018; 2: e451–61;
  https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2542-5196%2818%2930206-7

- **Challenges**

By renovating our house, we became strongly aware that taking the best climate and environmental decisions can be very complex and sometimes tricky:

- Optimal choices at a certain stage can become different in a later stage, thanks to new research and new techniques. Mere ecological choices are not sufficient anymore. Priority has to be given to larger sustainable criteria, with the lowest negative impact on climate change and environment during the whole life cycle of a product, starting at production, passing through transport and installation and ending with recycling. Initially we, for example, wanted organic cork to insulate our roofs, but this cork had to be imported from Portugal or Morocco and moreover has a less insulating Lambda value than the locally produced mineral wool: 0,038 - 0,040 W/mK instead of 0,032 – 0,040 W/mK.
- Websites of some building enterprises informed us that sustainability and the "cradle to cradle" principle are their priority. In reality we could not always be sure of this. Sometimes we had to make our choices quickly, e.g. to prevent feeling very cold or using a huge amount of energy in our house during the first winter. It was clear that we wanted new window frames with long lasting wood, grown nearby and certified FSC or PEFC. We got a positive answer about these requests from the window provider, but later we got to know that our wood was grown in faraway Siberia. We are still waiting for the answer of the transport company to know from which Siberian region and which Siberian environmental company this wood has come. We question their transparency.
- Some measures are climate friendly, but not environmental and health friendly, such as using wood for heating. Heating by wood could remain CO2 (carbon dioxide) neutral for climate, but produces a big amount of air polluting NO2 (nitrogen dioxide) in the environment. In particular in highly populated cities it causes several arterial and respiratory tract diseases and many premature deaths. Brussels is breaching the legal limit for NO2. Burning wood also produces carbon monoxide, dioxin, particulate matter and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon. Therefore, we had to accept that wood is not an adequate product for daily heating in our city house. (https://www.clientearth.org/new-air-quality-data-show-brussels-fails-take-air-pollution-seriously/) (https://woodsmokepollution.org/pellet-stoves.html).
- Unfortunately, the best measures are sometimes too expensive, like windows with very performant triple glazing. As the difference in energy saving between triple and double very performant glazing is very low, we have chosen the cheaper very performant double glazing. Some prices of climate friendly techniques, however, will probably become lower in the future and then will get more affordable.

Gradually we are becoming aware that preventing climate change and taking care of environment and health requires a lot of searching for scientific reports and discussing amongst ourselves before making wise decisions. It has, however, become an interesting learning process, which we now can share a bit with you.

# Environment and Laudato Si Germany Gerda Kaufmann Birgit Klapdor

We will first try to describe the reality in Germany within the context of climate change and environment in this article, secondly the focus will be on Laudato Si in the context of our Grail members and friends in the last 3 years.

In Germany regulations exist to handle every kind of rubbish and waste. These regulations are resolved by the national government but are variably realized by the 16 federal states in Germany.

Grail members and friends living in different parts of the country have had diverse experience with it. For example, the government of North-Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) has changed. In 2018 it is composed of the CDU (Christ-Democratic-Union) and the FDP (Liberal-Democratic-Party). Several terms before were dominated by the SPD (Social Democratic Party). NRW is marked by highly developed industry, concentrated population, and branched travel-routes (streets, rails, river and airports). NRW is one of 3 federal states which exploit brown and black coal for the steel industry. The abandonment of exploitation and use of coal in Germany is a long lasting issue. The first coal mines were closed in 1959. In 2018 a long lasting plan was decided by the national government.

Renewable energies shall cover the demand for energy for daily use and industry until 2030. The cutoff of the atomic power plants has already begun. The security of old operating equipment is a main criterion.

In 2015 and 2016 the political discussion and the necessity of acting was dominated by the inflow of thousands of refugees. Our German chancellor, Angela Merkel, was very confident with her speech: “We can manage this!” The cities in Germany have been supported financially by the regional and national governments. Because of these new challenges the discussion about environment was relegated to the background.

The German population is confronted with the change in structure. The main concern is the increasing number of men and women who will lose their work as a result of implementing energy changes. It is important that national and regional governments facilitate the development of new areas and the educational possibilities for the affected people. Trade unions are required to cooperate. They exist in many areas. The German population has lived through a number of immigrations for the growing industrial plants and from East Germany to the free western part of the country. And there are still older persons who have experienced the refugee situation after 1945 when they lost their land in former East Germany.

Laudato Si, in the German version, was published in 2015. As the Grail in Germany is part of the Network Africa Germany, we gained from the incentives which are offered for their members.

In summer 2017 environmental reversal was demanded for the energy supply, for biological diversity in the use of waste and water. They pointed out what we can do in our everyday life.

Also over many years Grail women reflected commonly on ways of protecting the environment, living a simple life style. Programmes were needed from time to time as motivation.

In our Grail-meeting from 8th to 10th of February 2019 we had time for Laudato Si. Sister Ingrid Geißler, a member of NAD Germany, gave us a very interesting power-point-presentation, which was distributed to us later as a coloured hand-out. The 13 women had all read the Enzyklika Laudato Si, either alone or together in the group of South-Germany. The clear description from Sr. Ingrid deepened our

understanding for Franziskus´ motivation and our common desire. Starting from chapter 4 of the papal letter, the holistic environment was the middle of our discussion (LS 139): climate change (LS 20-22), water (LS27-31), the loss of the biodiversity (LS 32-34), the quality of living (LS 43-47), the inequality in all of our situations of life (LS 48-52). We always were conscious about the double crisis, which we have: social and environmental. In three familiar steps: to see, to show, to do, we have chosen parts which have relevance to our life. The civilians in Germany are very active and have started signature campaigns. Often our elder participants sign on for such campaigns, for example the holistic environment, the problem of bee mortality and the lack of plants in gardens, and joining demonstrations.

The sensitivity for the environment increases by understanding the social-political realities in the world. The consumption of clothes and food is more often decided by the transparency of the ways and means of production. Integrity of creation is mentioned in schools and preschools in the last years because of Laudato Si. The German conference of bishops concluded in their session on September 27th 2018 the "Responsibility for creation as a clerical mission" and gave guidance. A flyer to work with was made in the diocese Essen (NRW) and was distributed. "The ten guidelines concern the affairs of church- , diocese- and social-political engagement".

# Italy Overview Claudia Gras

Here is a brief overview of the activities that various Italian Grail members are doing related to climate change. As a group, we have discussed the Pope's Laudato Si and its messages related to climate change. Other members have made individual contributions. For example, Marina Sangalli has started an ethical purchasing group, together with a friend, aimed at helping around 20 families acquire food directly from the producers, at 0 km, and sustain organic farming and produce. Rosy Rodrigues in Pirapora, Calabria has been running a biodynamic agriturismo for over 20 years, including a guesthouse and farm with homegrown organic fruits and vegetables. Anita Saisi has been studying and coordinating discussion groups around the topic of Ecotheology. Anita Cappello has been doing in-depth studying and research on the topic of health and environment. Teresa Manera cultivates her own garden, thereby coming into direct contact with the Earth and feeling the power of nature. Gemma di Marino has just written an article for a newsletter of a local NGO based on an imaginary discussion between herself and the young Swedish climate activist, Greta Thunberg, who recently spoke at the UN Climate Change conference in Poland which I have translated into English for this issue of Crossroads. If you would like further details about any/all of the activities, we are happy to provide them.

# The Climate Crisis: Gemma DiMarino Italy

*Humanity's greatest and most complex challenge today*

***"You say you love your children... yet you are stealing their future before their eyes. "***

These are some of the words from the speech Greta Thunberg gave during the 24th Global Climate Conference in Poland in December 2018. Greta is 16 years old, lives in Sweden and since September 2018, every Friday she skips school to stand in front of the Swedish Parliament with a sign which says: **School strike for climate**. I imagine being there, next to her, and asking her why.

Here she is, sitting on the ground, with her sign. She's a little girl, with long pigtails and an innocent face.

I approach her slowly and say: "Hi Greta, I'm Italian, my name is Gemma." She says "hi". I ask her if I can

sit next to her and ask her some questions. "Sure," she says kindly, "have a seat. That way I'm not alone". And I: "Why are you here with this sign? Shouldn't you be in school?" She looks at me, smiles, and responds in serious voice, almost as though reprimanding me: "because it doesn't make sense to go to school and study for our future, if our future is at risk of not existing. Also you, instead of worrying about the future, should try to change it while you can".

I reply: "You are right, but here, all alone, who listens to you? People pass, they see you, they stop a second, read your sign, and leave."

Her look, even more than the words which she uses to respond, are full of pride:

***"They will see me, listen to me and many will understand. You will see that not only you, but others like me, realize that and will do as I do. You'll see, I will be able to tell rich folks how the suffering of many pays for the luxuries of the few".***

As I'm talking to her, my mind wanders to another person, Pope Francis, who in his encyclical "Laudato Sì" calls me to an ecological conversion: take care and safeguard the Earth, our common home.

I end my imaginary conversation with Greta and think about all that she told me. That which could be a heroic albeit small example of protest could find imitators throughout the rest of the world.

Thanks to the social network campaign, and many newspapers, the world is talking about her. There are millions of students that have protested in plazas and squares around the world: in Ethiopia, Australia, Switzerland and Europe, using signs with the same slogan "School Strike for Climate". Also in Milan, in Piazza della Scala, every Friday from 12-1 pm there is a manifestation/strike.

Greta was right. They have paid attention to her and she took the stage to tell 200 world leaders: "**I am interested in saving the planet Earth**". Here is a brief excerpt of her long speech:

"*…You talk only about moving ahead with the same bad capitalist ideas that have gotten us into this mess, even when the only sensible thing to do is to pull the emergency brake. You are not mature enough to tell us how things really are, not even about the responsibility which you leave to us?"*

*"….I don't care about being popular. I am interested in climate justice and saving the planet. Our civilization is sacrificed for the opportunity of a very few to continue to make enormous amounts of money."*

*"….Our biosphere is sacrificed so that rich people in countries like mine can live in luxury. It is the suffering of many that pays for the luxuries of the few. In 2078 I will be 75 years old. If I have children, maybe they will spend the day with me. Maybe they will ask me about you. Maybe they will ask why you didn't do anything while there was still time to act."*

*"…. You say you love your children above all else, yet you are robbing them of their future in front of their eyes. Until you start concentrating on that which has to be done and that which is politically possible, there is no hope".*

Greta is teaching us that there are no impossible challenges. The impossibility lies in our mindset. Unfortunately we know the reality about our planet's health: glaciers that are melting, seas that are rising, cyclones and floods, droughts, heat waves and cold fronts, forests that are dying and deserts that are advancing.

The year 2018 was a year of record warming, one of the warmest ever. Let's review some facts: 9 out of 10 people today breath dangerously polluted air and there are an estimated 7 million premature deaths/year due to illnesses related to the pollution of bio-oxide and particulate matter, which threaten the health of our children, causing developmental delays, lower IQ and autism. The amount of food that we waste (one third of all produced) is in step with the deforestation that we provoke to cultivate ever more areas, the desertification that we bring about due to the deforestation and the fact that 821 million people are starving. Greta's tenacity, activism, and strong words take me back to Pope Francis encouraging us to act together:

"….*The first is political action, crucial to tame tecnocratic and speculative logic and to make the prospects of the common good central" (LS.26).*

*"….But political action also requires the participation of all, a real 'ecological citizenship' (LS 211) able to exert a healthy pressure on those who hold political, economic and social power' (LS 206).*

We only have 2 generations (20-25 years) to save the planet from climactic changes and the devastating effects these will have on human health and our land; it is what the president of the Higher Institute of Health, Walter Ricciardi, says:

*"…. Climate change is the real global threat of this century and cuts across all human and environmental conditios, from heat waves, to water supply to food and waste disposal. The quality of our lives, our health, and our survival are therefore put at serious risk by climate change produced above all by pollution. Managing these transformations, changing course has become the real emergency and the real challenge. This challenge is only overcome with the cooperation of all. From policy makers, to the industrial world, to education and through everyday actions".*

# Grail Kenya responding to *Laudato Si* Discussions Sarah Mabanja

Receiving the *Laudato Si* message in the Kenyan Grail seemed alarming information to most of the Grail members. This is because it appeared as if we live in a world whose environment we don't understand. Although most of the activities we practice, like farming, rely on climate patterns, it had remained a puzzle to many of the Grail members why the harvests were not as heavy and of good quality as they used to be in the previous years. A good number of us were not fully aware that the climate change affecting us in the recent years are is partly caused by ourselves.

As Pope Francis puts it, "There is a need to enter into dialogue with individuals and especially among Christians." Kenyan Grail members think that the Pope's idea is worthy. The reception of this Encyclical has become an eye opener to us. We sat down in our teams and did some evaluation of ourselves at the initial stage of these discussions. Guided by the Grail vision and mission of transformation of the world and looking at the SDGs, we all agreed that we have a role to play.

We are looking at the origin of the climate change problems specifically in our immediate environment and country, how we are involved in the disfigurement and destruction of the creation as Grail members in our daily activities, both small and big. There is a need for the Grail members to first learn, explore and find out what the big issue on climate change in Kenya might be. This, of course, will require some bit of research and different approaches. It is not an easy task, but members think familiarizing themselves with normal issues affecting change of climate is the best starting point.

Looking at the status of the research findings by "Kenya Talks Climate" in 2017, some of the identified causes included poverty, lack of knowledge, drought, food security, poor leadership, ignorance etc.

We are imagining that there are some parts of the environment we have" hurt" with or without our knowledge. For instance, forests that were once treasured are fading away, the beautiful indigenous trees have disappeared, the wells and springs are drying up, drought has surrounded us, the number of our big five animals is also fading away. The beauty of Africa is disappearing without our knowledge.

With the Guide questions on Laudato SI in our hands, we are discovering ourselves. We are all on a self-searching process, and we hope to define ourselves and our position in the transformation of the world. In one of the discussions at Nairobi Grail meetings, we decided that before engaging in to discussions of the Laudato Si, we should have an hour of silence. We treasured this one hour of silence and when it was time to talk, some of these questions came up:

***What /who are we transforming? How are we transforming? Where are we transforming? When is the right time to transform? What are we looking forward to achieve?***

We realized that sometimes transformation needs silence. Maybe having dialogue with ***oneself***, before dialogue with ***others*** could make a big difference.

As we continue discovering ourselves, it is interesting that the discussions are taking us back to deeply reflect on the mission and vision of the Grail, reminding us of our call and helping us to stand with the earth as our home.

Self-search and individual actions are one of the main tasks we have assigned ourselves. Some of the responses from our Kenyan Grail teams have revealed that out of the 32 members of the Grail in Kenya, at least 90 % agree that they have participated in the destruction of our earth. For instance, 70% have reported they have been using firewood for cooking in their homes, an activity that seems simple, yet is so destructive to the environment. We are all thinking of alternatives. Some members who stay in the countryside have already discovered energy from biogas, which is made using animal waste. Since most Grail families own this farm animals like cows within their compounds, this option sounds promising.

Although the biogas installation requires experts, at least 10 % of the members have managed to install biogas stoves and they are already using biogas in their homes. It is less expensive and more reliable compared to electricity and gas, which are a bit expensive. The remaining percentage is looking forward to doing the same.

Grail members in Kenya have also come up with the tradition of harvesting rain water, an activity that has attracted other family members of the Grail, neighbors and communities around them.

All Grail members are observing healthy eating in their families; organic farming is highly practiced by members. We are embracing the use of biogas produced from processed animal waste as an alternative to electricity. At least four Grail members have installed solar systems in their homes and they are working out well.

The Grail members are not doing this alone, but most of them have joined groups of other women in the community and in church to address climate change issues.

*There is more to report on what Grail members are doing in Kenya. We will continue sharing our experiences and the actions we are taking to respond to the Laudato Si*

# RESEÑA DEL TRABAJO DESARROLLADO SOBRE: "EL CUIDADO DE LA MADRE TIERRA" POR: Mujeres del Grial Morelos-Valle de México A. C.

**Elaboró: Ma. Luisa Mejía Lagunas**

**Febrero, 2019**

**UN POCO DE HISTORIA**

Desde sus inicios nuestro movimiento de mujeres en los 18 países, donde nos encontramos, hemos priorizado el cuidado de nuestro entorno.

En nuestro país México, arrancamos en 1993, dándonos a la tarea de planear una serie de exposiciones, que llamamos: "Rehabilitación Ambiental," en la comunidad del área Industrial en Jiutepec y en Jardines de niños, en total fueron 6 expos.

Asistimos como organización a estudios especiales sobre el Medio Ambiente, tanto a nivel Internacional, Nacional, Estatal y Municipal con el objeto de ir fortaleciéndonos como organización de mujeres en esos temas.

Nuestro trabajo más fuerte ha sido, el desarrollo de proyectos para favorecer al medio ambiente, con la Construcción de Estufas Ahorradoras de leña, en Cuentepec, Temixco, Miacatlan en Coatetelco, Ocuituco en el barrio de La Asunción y San Miguel Huepalcalco, en Cuernavaca en las colonias de Santa Clara y Santa Úrsula, así como en Zacualpan en las comunidades de Popotlan y Tlacotepec; Sistemas para captar agua de lluvias, en la cabecera municipal de Totolapan y en Cuentepec de Temixco, esto fue en Morelos

Y en Los Reyes La Paz del Estado de México, se realizaron actividades de siembra orgánica con el cultivo de Hortalizas.

Promovimos la construcción de Biofiltros e (20 en total) en Cuentepec de Temixco; y los cultivos Bíointensivos en total se beneficiaron 20 familias.

Estos cultivos los promovimos en la cabecera municipal de Ocuituco, beneficiando a 12 familias, y la elaboración de composta en Cuentepec, Ocuituco y Tlacotepec del municipio de Zacualpan, donde se vieron beneficiadas 34 familias de las comunidades antes mencionadas

Se han realizado Jornadas ecológicas en Cuentepec, con el barrido de calles y limpieza del río en la parte donde lavan la ropa las mujeres del pueblo.

En esta misma comunidad Cuentepec realizamos la primera siembra orgánica, donde mejoramos el suelo, con la composta que el grupo preparó con anterioridad para la siembra, para ello se diseñó un proceso de capacitación con el grupo, y se construyó un bíofiltro en el lugar de la siembra, para que el agua del río, llegara limpia al cultivo,

Estas actividades fueron apoyadas con recursos de la SEMARNAT, con los programas: Empleo Temporal y Proyectos para mujeres.

Por último comentamos que los cultivos bíointensivos los hemos promovido en San Sebastián Ixcapa de Oaxaca y en los Reyes La Paz del estado de México, don se beneficiaron 30 familias; con recursos del Grial.

Municipios y comunidades Atendidas: Cuernavaca en las colonias de Plan de Ayala, Pueblo de Ocotepec, Antonio Barona, Ahuatepec, Loma de Santa Clara y Santa Úrsula.
Jiutepec, en Col. Otilio Montaño, Milpillas, y CIVAC.
Temixco: Cuentepec
Miacatlan: Coatetelco
Tlayacapan: Amatlipac San Agustín)
Totolapan: Cabecera municipal y barrio de San Marcos
Axochiapan: Colonia El Progreso y Colonia Los Reyes
Huitzilac: Coajomulco, Montecasino y Cabecera Municipal
Ocuituco: Barrio de La Asunción y San Miguel Huepalcalco
Zacualpan de Amilpas:
Popotlán
Tlacotepec
Estado de México: Los Reyes La Paz y Acopilco
Estado de Oaxaca: San Sebastián Ixcapa y Costatitlán

**POBLACIÓN META**

La población meta la conforman mayoritariamente ***mujeres*** activas dispuestas a asumir un rol participativo y gestoras en el desarrollo sostenible y autogestivo de su realidad (vecinas, algunas parceleras, profesionales, trabajadoras domésticas entre otras, que residen en los municipios antes mencionados, donde establecemos los vínculos de coordinación, para la implantación de proyectos de beneficio popular con las instancias interesadas en conocer y capacitarse sobre las potencialidades de la cooperación solidaria.

**METODOLOGÍA DE TRABAJO**

La metodología de trabajo en la mayoría de las acciones realizadas, está basada en la Educación Popular, usando “El Taller” como eje metodológico en todo el proceso del proyecto y/o actividad, porque en él se privilegia el diálogo, ya sea en parejas, en plenaria y en equipo, compartiendo esfuerzos y experiencias de cada participante; tomando en cuenta los siguientes elementos: Contextualización del grupo, Justificación, una semblanza del grupo, Objetivo General del Proyecto, Metas y/o resultados, relación de actividades, cronograma y presupuesto de dichas actividades así como el rol de cada participante.

**PROYECTOS EJECUTADOS:**

**1.-Cosecha de Agua en los Altos de Morelos**

Totolapan, Morelos.

Objetivo: Construir 15 Sistemas para captar agua de lluvia en la cabecera municipal y sus barrios, del municipio de Totolapan, para el grupo de Mujeres integrantes del grupo "Mujeres en Tierra Sagrada" A.C. donde se beneficiaron 15 familias.

**2.-"Tlacaxipehualiztle"** (E cambio que realiza la gente), proyecto realizado en la comunidad Indígena de Cuentepec perteneciente al municipio de Temixco.

Objetivo: Sembrar y Cultivar en un área de 1000 metros: Huanzontles, chile criollo, tomate, rábanos y calabaza, para promover una alimentación sana, en el grupo de mujeres "Sihuame Kuentepek".

En este proyecto se beneficiaron 13 familias del grupo mencionado. Se recibió subsidio del Programa de Mujeres de SEMARNAT.

**3.-"Mujeres Indígenas caminando hacia la Seguridad Alimentaria"**

Objetivo: Proporcionar a 15 familias de la comunidad indígena de Cuentepec una alimentación sana, cultivando en los patios de las casas de las participantes hortalizas, como son rábanos, jitomates, tomates, huanzontles y chile criollo, que forman parte de su alimentación.

Aquí se recibió Subsidio del Programa para grupos de mujeres ejercicio 2012 de SEMARNAT

**4.-"Manos de Mujeres Indígenas cuidando el Agua"**

Objetivo: Construir 13 sistemas para captar agua de lluvia", en la comunidad indígena de Cuentepec. Donde se beneficiaron 13 familias del grupo Sihuame Kuentepek.
Se recibieron subsidios del Programa para Mujeres de SEMARNAT. Temixco: Cuentepec.

**5.-Construcción de 212 Estufas Ahorradoras de Leña en Cuentepec**

Con subsidio de SEMARNAT, del Programa de Mujeres.

**6.-Construcción de 20 bíofiltros** para tratamiento de aguas jabonosas en Cuentepec, con subsidio de SEMARNAT.

**7.-Instalación de 20 cultivos bíointensivos** en Cuentepec, con subsidio de SEMARNAT.

**8.-Construcción de 140 estufas ahorradoras de leña** en Coatetelco, del Municipio de Miacatlan, con subsidio de SEMARNAT.

**9.-Limpieza de Carretera**: entrada a la comunidad de Coatetelco al muelle de la laguna de ese poblado, aquí se beneficiaron 20 personas de la comunidad (14 mujeres y 6 hombres). Subsidio de SEMARNAT del Programa de Empleo Temporal.

**10.-Construccion de 40 estufas ahorradoras de leña** en Tlacotepec y Popotlán del municipio de Zacualpan de Amilpas, beneficiándose 40 familias, con el Programa de Empleo Temporal de SEMARNAT.

**11.-Construcción de 40 estufas ahorradoras de leña** en Ocuituco (con recursos de SEMARNAT), cultivo de maíz, fríjol flor de cempoaxochitl y crianza de lechones, con recursos del Grial.

**12.-Cultivo de cítricos (limón)** en la colonia los Reyes de Axochiapán. Se necesitan recursos para continuar las actividades.

**13.-Construcción de 40 estufas ahorradoras de leña** en las colonias de Santa Clara y 30 en la colonia Santa Úrsula del municipio de Cuernavaca, con recursos de SEMARNAT, aquí se beneficiaron 70 familias de esas colonias; (siembra de maíz, calabaza y fríjol) en Santa Clara con recursos del Grial, beneficiándose 15 familias

**14.-Participacón activa de los grupos de Grial**, Ocuituco y Coatetelco en "El Primer Encuentro de Docentes Caminando hacia la sustentabilidad" en Jojutla, Colonia Unidad Morelos escuela técnica 34.

**EQUIPOS DE TRABAJO COMUNITARIOS CONSTITUÍDOS:**

- 5 Mujeres de la comunidad Indígena de Cuentepec, para construcción de Estufas Ahorradoras de Leña, Sistemas para captar agua de lluvia, cultivos Bíointensivos y construcción de Bíofiltros.
- 3 Mujeres de la comunidad Indígena de Coatetelco (Miacatlán), para Construir Estufas Ahorradoras de leña.
- 3 mujeres y 3 hombres, expertos en siembra orgánica, cultivo de flor para muertos y construcción de estufas ahorradoras de leña, en el municipio de Ocuituco.

**Coordinación, Organización y Supervisión general del trabajo estuvo a cargo de la suscrita.**

# A Summary of "Care for Mother Earth" by Grail Women from Morelos-Valle de Mexico A.C. Tiffany Curtis USA

Written by Ma. Luisa Mejia Lagunas *Summarized & Translated by Tiffany Curtis, U.S. Grail (Please see original document for the full story in Spanish!)*

From the beginning, our movement of women in 18 countries has cared for our environment, wherever we might be. In Mexico, starting in 1993, we worked on a series of projects called "Environmental Rehabilitation" in a community in an industrial area in Jiuptepec and in preschools. Our most impactful work has been that we have developed various projects throughout the country, impacting hundreds of families, including: the construction of ecological wood-fire stoves, rainwater capture systems, organic agricultural projects, "biofilters" (for purifying water), compost systems, river clean ups, trainings, and more. The many communities touched by our work are listed in the document. We have worked primarily with women who have been open to take on a leadership role in sustainable development and cooperative solidarity work. Our methodology is predominantly "Popular Education" - using workshops as the core of the process for the project or activity. This allows us to center dialogue (in pairs, as a large

group, in teams) sharing the strengths and experiences of each participant. Each project is listed in the document, with the community impacted and the work undertaken.

## Con nuestro cuidado, cuidamos la Tierra Modesta Arévalos Paraguay

La convocatoria del Papa Francisco con la Encíclica Laudato Sí para el cuidado de la "casa común" ha inspirado a tantas iniciativas desde las prácticas más pequeñas, hasta movimientos más universales.

*Taller sobre Planes de Vida*

En el norte de Paraguay hemos tomado un camino de movilizar jóvenes invitando al cuidado para recuperar el equilibrio en el planeta. Ése cuidado ha de empezar por cada uno de nosotros mismos, siguiendo con el cuidado por los demás, que necesariamente lleva a cuidar del planeta.

Los soportes de la vida que incluye la tierra, el agua, los bosques y las semillas nos garantizan la posibilidad del buen vivir como habitantes del planeta. Así, los talleres para descubrir el talento innato que trae cada persona, aprender a autovalorarse, amarse a sí mismo conectando con prácticas de espiritualidad profunda como la vía autentica para otra cultura ecológica, porque "no habrá una nueva relación con la naturaleza sin un nuevo ser humano. No hay ecología sin una adecuada antropología" (LS 118)

La generosidad de la tierra para proveernos lo que necesitamos para alimentarnos, el agua o el aire que respiramos es momento de ser valorada con más consciencia de respeto y gratitud, pues, para transformar, nos necesitamos transformados(as).

*Parcela de la abundancia*

Nuestras prácticas nos conectan con toda la trama de la vida en la naturaleza dónde se abre la posibilidad de completarnos íntegramente con ella. Es la amorosa manera de reconciliarnos plenamente con toda la creación y con Dios mismo.

En éste camino cada participante va tomando su lugar que quiere y necesita protagonizar, viviendo sus talentos, reconociendo su abundancia y su escasez para donar un aporte a las generaciones futura asumiendo que, con nuestro cuidado, cuidamos la Tierra.

# WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN RAISING AWARENESS ON ENVIROMNENTAL CONSERVATION IN MOSHI RURAL DISTRICT IN KILIMANJARO, TANZANIA? Lucy Kimaro

The snow-capped mountain is within a few degrees south of the equator. It has done much to bring prosperity to the local inhabitants for centuries. The melting snows of Kilimanjaro for instance have always been the source of water for domestic use and irrigation for banana groves and coffee plantations on lower slopes of the mountain, which are a major source of local people's livelihood. Kilimanjaro Mountain is the source of many rivers and lake systems reaching far beyond the region.

The Chagga people live on the slopes of this famous mountain; traditionally they knew Kilimanjaro as the Mountain of God. So, they believed that the mountain of snow literally was a place where God lived, the provider of water for human beings, animals and plants. Today Kilimanjaro Mountain is still the single largest source of life and tourist dollars in the struggling Tanzanian economy. Global warming is a big threat because its impact is already badly felt in the region. Climate change from the last few decades has caused a lot of glacier to melt. The beautiful ice fields on top of Kilimanjaro Mountain are feared to be completely melted away in 15 years to come if the earth continues to warm at the present rate.

Other destructive activities on the natural forest of Mount Kilimanjaro include deforestation for lumber and firewood plus frequent fires in the forest caused by some local people harvesting honey. Certainly, without this mountain and its snow the people who live on the slopes of this mountain can hardly survive. This is because the mountain provides fresh water for drinking, crop irrigation and hydroelectric production. It means that without water, there is no life, and the disappearance of snow is a dangerous sign not only for thousands of people who live on the slopes of the mountain, but also for the entire people of Tanzania and Africa. It is said that over 80% of the ice cover has been lost since 1912. The glacier that filled the crater that has been the glory of this mountain for many centuries is almost vanishing; and what is remaining is the volcanic black dust of the mountain. Some of the devastating effects of environmental degradation include shortage of rains and decrease of beautiful animal species and plant species in Kilimanjaro natural forest.

Christianity has got a fundamental role to play in ensuring the continuation of the physical and spiritual life of the planet earth. In Kilimanjaro Christianity is older than a century. It has a profound means of convincing the believers, who are about 90% of the whole population in the area, to know the dangers the world is facing due to environmental destruction. The voice of the church could play a critical role in raising awareness on environmental conservation in general and the protection of Mount Kilimanjaro natural forest. It is unfortunate that campaigns for environmental protection have been more political and economic rather than religious. The church needs to launch more aggressive campaigns towards curbing further environmental destruction, especially deforestation.

Awareness-raising is more needed now than ever; climate change and environmental crisis is becoming a grave problem year after year. It is a serious global problem, it has provoked debates from every angle of the earth planet. The world governments, non- governmental organizations and Christian institutions have shown concern. However, Christian institutions and bodies at the local level need to do more in the preservation of the environment in Africa and the world in general. Thanks be to God that Pope Francis through "Laudato SI" challenged the Church and the entire world to handle Mother Nature with more care. As the Pope puts it, the worst effects of climate change are felt by developing countries (no. 25). The massive involvement of Christian leaders and Christians in campaigning for environmental conservation could bring a profound healing to the environment that has been so much wounded.

The church has a critical role to play not only in healing the environmental damages, but also in acting nobly to prevent further destruction. Christianity, being a dominant religious group in Kilimanjaro, is challenged to be active in rescuing the animal and plant species in danger of disappearing from the earth. Berry (1999) notes an extensive degree of extinguished life systems in the world. According to him, human beings have silenced too many wonderful voices of the universe that spoke to us of the grand mysteries of existence, like rivers, birds, trees etc. The voice of rivers flowing on the gorges and rocks of Kilimanjaro is diminishing because several have dried up. It is very sad indeed. Church leaders could balance their efforts in ensuring both saving people's souls as well as the environment. It must be noted that for many people environmental death will also cause physical and spiritual death. The Scriptures tells it all as stated in Laudato SI no. 67. In actual fact, human salvation is meaningless without saving the world in which we live.

There is a need for more research in order to establish how every Christian and religious leadercould contribute in reclaiming the lost intimacy between human beings, the sacred and natural world. It is only efforts made now that will bring back enough rains, natural perennial rivers and fresh air. Our soul life is developed only in contact with our inner surrounding experiences. So integral is our inner world with the outer world that if the outer world is damaged, then the inner life of our soul is diminished proportionately. Planting more trees every year should be the priority to avoid more damage. This will create conducive weather for providing the basic human needs. However, to educate people on how to be responsible stewards of all creation is crucial.

**Some Views from scholars**

Unequivocally, environmental conservation is a concern of all people because global warming is causing unbelievable suffering to human beings, animals and other creations. Today the earth planet is vulnerable to destruction because whatever pollution goes into the atmosphere from any city or industry in the world pollutes the whole planetary atmosphere (Cobb, 1992: 121). The melting of polar icecaps and mountain glaciers like Kilimanjaro is the result of overall environmental damage. Generally, this situation has increased the long periods of drought in the world, particularly in Africa, and indeed it is a devastating situation for the poor people who depend on seasonal rains to plant their food crops. Creation is an indication of God's presence--for example, stars, moon, mountains, lakes, seas, forests, plants birds and animals. Destroying the forest is destroying the face of God, whom we love (Gitau, 2000).

Researchers have established that environmental degradation is the cardinal cause of drought, famine and mass death of both human and animal. Gitau (2000) reports from his study shows that lack of concern and genuine care, ignorance plus greed have contributed to further deterioration of the environment. He further reveals that the church has not played a critical role in the struggle against environmental degradation. In fact, churches can be used as a place for campaigning and educating people on the importance of environmental conservation for the current time and for future generations.

According to Bassett (1992), Christians have good reasons to share with deep ecologists the concern about the degradation of the environment because there are intrinsic values in all creatures. Ruether (1992), on the other hand, notes that destruction of the rain forest in tropical zones that generate the great rain clouds is another reason for environmental degradation, especially persistent drought. This is contrary to the Gospel teaching about simplicity of life and voluntary poverty (Matthew 6: 25-26). In Africa, deforestation primarily through clearing land for lumber, firewood and cultivation of food crops is a big problem. Obviously people have to survive--that is, family has to be fed, crops have to be grown, and money should be raised by all means in order to meet other essentials in life. The church could educate people on how to get their daily needs without necessarily damaging nature. However, the church does not seem to have entered into serious discussions regarding the negative consequences of environmental destruction as a result of human activities. Fundamentally, there is wisdom in the Christian heritage that could give guidance, motivation and direction in forming new values that stress individual and joint responsibility towards the environment and towards nurturing harmony between humanity and the environment. Cobb (1992: 106).

Stewardship of God's creation has been entrusted to human beings. To Africans environment implies totality of life. Historically, religion in Africa is linked with creation of the world, whether visible or invisible. In addition, nature was filled with religious significance; thus Christian critical reflection on how to be friendlier to creation is vital. It is upon Christians to realize their obligation as creatures on earth. Their quality of being, the integral functioning of the earth and the whole cosmos as a whole depend on their positive appreciation of the earth as a home for every creature (Gitau, 2000: 33).

Extinction of animal and plant species year after year is making human life vulnerable, due to possible lack of fresh air and decline of food for future generations. In the book of Genesis (1: 31), God views the whole creation as very good. It implies that the total creation has value before Him. From the biblical point of view all creatures belong together and humans are part of it. In other words, human beings, animals, plants and all natural phenomena are integral components of the larger earth community. Apparently human beings are charged with the obligation to act in a responsible way towards creation, comparable to the way God acts on them. There is God's voice through nature and persons. In that context, if human beings understand themselves as species, they are called upon to respect other species. Berry (1999: 4-5) remarks that

*In this community every being has its own role to fulfill, its own dignity, its inner spontaneity. Every being has its own voice. Every being declares itself to the entire universe. Every being enters into communion with other beings. This capacity for relatedness, for presence to other beings, for spontaneity in action, is a capacity possessed by every mode of being throughout the entire universe. So too every being has rights to be recognized and revered. Trees have tree rights, insects have insects rights, rivers have rivers rights, mountains have mountains rights…. We have human rights. We have rights to the nourishment and shelter we need. We have rights to habitat. But we have no rights to deprive other species of their proper habitat…*

At this juncture of our history it is important to realize that human beings, animals, plants and all natural phenomena are integral components of the larger earth community.

Overcoming the abuse of creation is now a noble commitment for all concerned human beings. For Christians it is important to realize that the earth planet is sacred and that by taking good care of it we become sacred too.

The survival of the planet earth is a human project that involves economic, political and religious vision. The church's role is to bring light that illuminates specific issues concerning the protection of the environment. For many years Christianity has demonstrated concern for human survival not only spiritually but also physically, like providing food and shelter to the needy. In this respect, the Christian role to protect nature is very crucial. It is obvious that if nature is not healed, even efforts for human salvation cannot succeed.

Cobb (1992) remarks that full participation of the church in this noble task of conserving the environment would be the best way of airing the Christian voice against poverty, famine and diseases caused by pollution. Since the church has learnt over years how to make space for diverse programs, focused vision is needed for environmental healing and sustainability. Jesus Christ, according to Gitau (2000), is the great environmentalist because his theory of life centers on simplicity, hence opposed to over exploitation of the planet earth.

*Jesus stressed the need for interior attitude of detachment as well as exterior renunciation of material goods, that is, desiring only the basic minimum necessary for life. In his human condition, Jesus is said to have chosen a state of poverty and deprivation in order to show in what consists the true wealth…Jesus taught detachment from earthly riches…Environmentally interpreted, frugality of life as advocated for by Christ would reduce humanity's rush to manipulate nature for selfish ends…*

According to Jesus, human beings are to act as stewards representing God by caring for the physical environment. They have failed in one way or another to act as good and faithful servants of the master in taking care of the property. Christians are challenged to make life on earth meaningful by using it in a profitable manner. Up to this point human beings have abused nature so much, that is why the Christian religion has a critical role to play in leading people to repent and change their ruthless and negative attitude against nature.

Christians have to understand that they are part of the environmental problem and hence should be part of the solution as they take active participation to heal the wounded earth.

Contrary to this, the universe will continue to judge human beings as being hostile to habitation. Apparently it is noteworthy to realize that the role for taking care of the environment is not a choice but a special assignment given to human beings by God. So the ability to fulfill this duty is bestowed on us too. The most important thing is to know that one has a duty to God to make the environment better (Berry, 1999).

## US Grail Climate Action Circle Marian Ronan

Formed at the 2017 US Grail General Assembly, the national Grail Climate Action Circle focuses on education of the US Grail membership on climate change and the related global environmental crisis. Our six members meet on the telephone once a month and take responsibility for posts in the Grail newsletter and articles and reviews in the monthly Grail publication Gumbo. We reached out to involve all US Grail members in a discussion of *Laudato Si'* by forming and leading telephone discussion groups, using the International Grail study document (co-authored by one of the members of our group). We also educate ourselves by reading and discussing material about climate change and related issues.

## Testimonies from several members of the Laudato Si' weekly phone group in the U.S. Ieva Zadina USA

Dear Grail sisters,

Pope Francis's Laudato Si' has deeply moved many of us in the U.S. Grail. Below are some testimonies from the U.S. Grail Laudato Si' discussion group, which is still meeting weekly by conference call. We are seven members at present, and gladly welcome others (you can call in any Wednesday, 7-8 pm EST, at 513-622-9590). You will see the ways the encyclical is helping connect us as Grail to pursue understanding and action. Such community-building is in itself an essential action for Our Common Home. An important action inspired and guided by Laudato Si' has been in process for over a year. Our hope and aim is to create an "Earth Citizens Center" at the Cornwall Grail, which would seek to model climate change solutions, including trials of new spiritual, social, and economic paradigms. Following are testimonies from some members of our group

leva Zadina

I've been part of the Laudato Si' phone group from the start (April, 2018). In the beginning, we used the summary and questions prepared by Marian Ronan, Patricia Gemmell and Sarah Mabanja, and I found them very helpful. Some of us decided to continue after the initial seven weeks were up. As I go deeper into studying the Encyclical, I'm realizing, as Pope Francis says, how deeply interconnected things are: action to counter climate disruption, land justice, food justice, regenerative farming on small farms, vibrant local communities, transitioning to renewable forms of energy, science informed by ethics, curbing greed and waste, structural justice in all forms of governance from the local to the international, a

conversion of heart which enables us to hear and respond to the cry of the poor and the cry of the Earth, and inspires us to work joyfully to help co-create healthy people and a healthy planet.
**Anne Hurley, Boston**

Regarding my own looking at care of Earth, Our Common Home: What God Wants - is What the Earth Needs. And we are part of the Earth and can begin to feel the pain of the World, with the poorest having the worst time. The Grail can study the needs and help ourselves and others be aware. We need to study, and help pass it on, and sing: 'Oh Lord, stay with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is coming to a close.' I need to read much more and learn more daily. Seeing a big casket on TV today - even that could be taking too much space in the earth. Water needs cleansing ... and on and on. I need to become more aware, and discuss it with Grail and others. I look forward to these discussions and to hearing how the Grail and others wish to share the earth of Cornwall.
**Fran Martin, Cincinnati**
Although I had heard about the encyclical, and attended a talk about it, I would not have been able to imagine the depth and the richness of the conversation that Pope Francis has opened without our weekly telephone meetings. The passages chosen in the study guide, along with the discussion questions, focused our exploration of this important text which has been given as a gift not only to the Church but to the world. Our group encouraged me to follow through with thinking about the issues in a sustained way. There is so much content in the encyclical that I think it really demands a disciplined and thorough reading. This did not keep us from allowing our meetings to be responsive to our own situations. In particular, our members shared very concrete things they have been doing in their communities, such as lobbying for sustainable methods of waste disposal, composting, etc.; community gardening; and others. This gave us hope. We also shared a sense of despair because the encyclical has not been widely enough studied, and even more, we have not curbed the momentum toward ecological destruction at unprecedented pace for the benefit of a greedy global few. A lot of our conversation has turned toward the future of Cornwall as a place where the Grail's ecological vision of wholeness can be promoted. We have supported each other in prayer, and Terry Marshall's lovely weekly rituals leave us renewed and grateful.
**Deirdre Cornell, Highland, NY**

Wednesday night has become my most consistent and regular contact with the Grail. In the midst of our long going crisis I treasure it to hang in there. 70 years this summer! I have a sense that others of us feel the same way. It seems each one comes as often as she can and feels the warmth of welcome. It's been wonderful to come together to pray and think over some of the challenges of the world with sisters we are seldom in touch with, or haven't seen or talked to for years in some cases. What a chance to look more deeply into this most amazing comprehensive vision about a world that's possible! We want others in the Grail to have a chance to experience what we have felt -- the joy and hope that this deeper, regular sharing and getting to know some others gives to our lives. In a way that has not been possible for decades, these phone calls are the closest thing to Grail community that most of us have right now. Our further hope by doing this work and talking about it, is that it will energize us to find a way to invite new people to the group or start their own so they too can have this warm experience of Grail sharing and common purpose and goal." (Trina Paulus, Montclair, NJ) "Laudato Si' has been a guiding light for me since its

publication was first announced in the spring of 2015. I remember traveling to Iona College outside NYC to hear advance news and celebration of it, and how good it felt to be in community with people who cared so much for Our Common Home. In fact, community is of the essence for everything relating to Laudato Si' – community amidst all Creation. Climate crisis had already drawn me closer in mission with the Grail. I had been meeting with the New York Grail Climate Action Circle (GCAC) since April 29, 2013, five months after Superstorm Sandy shocked and damaged New York City. We wanted to act for climate justice, not just talk. We found, however, that study inspired us to action, and widened our sense of community. This was especially the case with Laudato Si', and with works such as Naomi Klein's This Changes Everything: Capitalism and the Climate (2014), both of which show the connectedness of everything. Through our studies and actions as Grail with like-minded organizations, we felt that we had contributed in achieving New York State's ban on fracking in December of 2014, though our advocacy against continuing fossil fuel infrastructure continues. By 2015, we were excited to participate, again through study and action, in the climate-justice movement gaining momentum in 2015 through Laudato Si', the People's Climate March in New York, and COP 21 in Paris. Another surge of energy in GCAC began in 2018. In February we had begun a movement to create an alternative to the sale of the Cornwall Grail, and in April several of us from the GCAC joined the national U.S. Laudato Si' study group. Together with others from the original group, we stayed on after the 7-week study and broadened our conversations to include personal sharing and praying the weekly prayer provided by Terry Marshall. These prayers, based on writing by Joan Chittester, further deepened connections between the personal and the public realities expressed by Pope Francis. All of this has given many of us in the New York Region of the Grail the courage to persist in our urgent mission: imagining and organizing for a cooperative community at the Cornwall Grail that might be a useful model for the world facing climate disruption.

**Ieva Zadina, Brooklyn, NY**

# Reflections from a session at a Think Well, March 2019 Sally Timmel

**The Training for Transformation** one-year diploma course held a Think Well with 25+ participants from 11 countries. They are looking at having shorter courses in countries and regions in order to broaden the base. They asked me to give a 'talk', so of course I put them in groups of 3's to raise their questions. The following is only a summary of the points I made from my notes, and not from all of the valuable questions raised by participants.

a. What were some of the risks and dangers Anne and I face doing this work?
   When Anne returned to South Africa from her studies of adult participatory education programs at Boston University, USA, [1971] she was asked by Steve Biko [the black consciousness movement] to 'teach' them about Paulo Freire's work on developing critical consciousness. Anne said to Steve that it needed a phased training of surveys, developing materials, analysing the issues, and training animators in participatory methods. After the final third phase, a number of these participants were being picked up by the apartheid government and interrogated and their lives threatened. Anne was counselled that she would either be imprisoned, banned, or she would have to go into exile. Anne

chose exile, and both Anne and I found work in furthering this methodology in Kenya, under the Catholic Bishops Conference. This work grew to reach over 3 million people [as a study showed]. The training for transformation program, as known today, would not have happened unless Anne took the risk of going into exile.

b. What keeps the work going? Leadership is key. Having a team that has vision, creativity and a passion for justice. A very important element of this work is working in teams. Developing and doing this work is hardly sustainable by oneself. In a team, we come to new solutions and possibilities. We also need the support and challenges from others. Sometimes we need constructive feedback on our behaviour. We also need appreciation when a job is well done. With trust, deep respect and love, others can bring out 'our best selves'.

c. Try new things and risk failure. If we keep using the same exercises and methods, we become stale and lose the dynamic of creativity and insights from groups and ourselves. We need to continuously tap into our own creativity, creativity of the team and groups with whom we work. This gives new energy and working on the edge of adventures.

d. If we are in charge of a program [and even working in the community] we need to delegate responsibilities. Delegation spreads out the work, multiplies its effectiveness tenfold, and builds new teams and potential new leadership. If we do not delegate well and trust the 'other', the work falls back onto ourselves, we get overworked, we get irritated with others, and potentially get burned out. [See chapter 10 in TforT book 3 on the Commitment Cycle]. We also need to remember that there are 100 ways to do something – not just 'my' way. Let 1000 flowers bloom! [This may mean letting go of what I think is the 'best' way.]

e. In delegating, we need to have clarity of goals, roles and accountability. This is from Jack Gibbs' theory of building organisations. The goals [intentions] of the group need to be specific and understandable. The roles of each person, committee, or organisation need to be defined and developed by all those involved. If these roles are not defined with expectations of each other, over time tensions emerge between parts of an organisation or between groups. Relationships fall apart, and movement forward is stalled. In the clarification of roles, the expectations of accountability to the whole also is critical, so that going towards the 'goal' can be met.

f. What are my own worries about the world now? The growth of fascism in many countries is very worrisome to me. I feel we are in 1933 Germany at this time. And how this works as we see in the USA, South Africa [under Zuma], India, and many countries is first, the ruling elite dismantles the justice systems [so they can move ahead with impunity], then as we say in South Africa, the capturing of the state by stealing resources, land, and means of production for the economic elite. This means resistance, working with communities to develop critical consciousness, and voting. In the USA past election in Nov. 2018, with tremendous work by millions, we voted in a wave of young, creative and energetic new congress people.

g. How do I feel about what Training for Transformation has done over the years? Of course the work is fantastic. But how does this make me feel? I do not think of a legacy or if this is 'my' work. The work is what is done by the participants themselves. I do not think this is a 'humble' statement, but a fact. All we have done is shared a methodology, some analysis, and help to use strategic planning tools.

h. What do I think about moving from a one-year diploma course to a focus on building country training and work at the local/national level? When Ntombi Nyathi [the director of Training for Transformation for the past 10 years] first told me about this shift in focus, I wrote her that as the Bible says, "There is a time for this, and a time for that." The way this program has operated in the past was like the farmer who scatters her seeds, and that which grows will grow, but we don't know for sure what will thrive. This new approach to strengthening local/national work is intentional. It is like planting specific plants in a specific area. And when we do this, it takes much more work! We have to dig the soil deep enough and loosen the soil so the seed survives. We need to water [nourish] the new plant, pull out the weeds [yes, there are those who may be negative and want to choke a new idea], and watch to ensure these new plants survive. When we harvest, we can count the yield [accountability]. At times we may use both approaches, but we are intentional about what strategy we are using.

i. Where do I find hope? This requires faith that goodness, truth and beauty will win the day. Anne told me that when blacks and whites were imprisoned in South Africa, a number of whites would come out of prison discouraged and disheartened [much by the oppressed conditions they have survived]. While many black South Africans came out energized and ready to start again the resistance to apartheid – whatever form that would take. She said black South Africans knew that history was on their side. We may be in a dark moment of history, but this too can be overcome.

An older Grail member in the USA [age 94 who has been in hospice for 3 years and continues to read lots of serious books and writes] says to me, "The evolutionary process is at work in the world. In this evolutionary process, there will be chaos which is necessary. And out of chaos there are breaks of light that show through. Follow that light and make it more illuminating in this world." So that is our task. And the best we can do – which gives meaning to our lives: Working for justice, but also towards that light with others!

**Let us remember Lao Tzu:**

Go to the people,
live with them,
learn from them,
love them.
And when the task is done,
the people will say,
"We have done this ourselves."

# International Grail Network Forum Terri Carter

The **International Grail Network Forum** was held in Mexico City from February 26 through February 28, 2019. The Forum included the Network coordinators as well as the ILT. Network coordinator's present were **Mary Boyd**: Trade and Global Justice; **Terri Carter** representing the Spirituality Network, **Sarah Mabanja,** Earth Network; **Ticha Vasconcelo**s of the newly formed Migration and Refugee Network and **Mary Kay Louchart** for GLUNN (Grail Link to the United Nations). **Dilma Alves, Mary Heidkamp** and **Maria Carlos Ramos** also attended serving as ILT. During the meeting each Network provided an inspiring and engaging report of their work, their Network's membership and their needs going forward. The meeting ended with a highly interactive conversation with Cristina dos Anjos Conceiçao, the coordinator for the 100 Years of The GRAIL Celebration to be held in Brazil in 2021.

We are very grateful for the strong support of **Rosaurora Espinosa** and her son Victor Lara, **Virginia Alvarado** and **Maya Gallardo**. This small team arranged for accommodations, rides to and from the airport, support with note taking at the meeting and any other need we could imagine.

During the meeting many subjects were discussed, the main focus being the following:

- Affirmation of the autonomy and the spirit of the Networks
- Role of Network Coordinators
- Recommendations on how to improve communications and interaction among Networks
- Network input on the upcoming 100 Years of the Grail Celebration
- Proposal by Network Coordinators for upcoming IC meeting

Grail International Networks connect members from around the globe who share a passion for these specific causes. Networks have an organic participatory nature where individual members have an important role to play within the Network. To learn more about a Network or to sign-up to join a Network, please contact the Network Coordinator:

Mary Boyd: **Trade and Global Justice** – maryboyd@live.ca
Patricia Gemmel: **Spirituality Network** - pgemmell@tpg.com.au
Sarah Mabanja: **Earth Network** - mabanja83@yahoo.com

Ticha Vasconcelos: **Migration and Refugee Network** - t.m.vasconcelos49@gmail.com
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